

A
PERSWASIVE
TO
Peace & Unity
AMONG
CHRISTIANS.

Notwithstanding their different
Apprehensions in lesser things.

1 Cor. 1. 10. *Now I beseech you, Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same Judgment.*

Phil. 2. 2. *Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same Love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

Rom. 14. 19. *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for Peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another.*

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THE deep sense of the very ill effects of our Church-Divisions hath put me, as it should do every good Christian, upon healing considerations. An account of some of which I shall give in the following Discourse; which I shall ground on the words of St. Paul, Eph. 4. 3. *Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.* Which contain that behaviour, in part, by
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which Christians may, and ought to walk worthy of that Vocation to which they are called: Unto which the Apostle doth, with the greatest earnestness, exhort and perswade them, in this and the two former Verses. And the words give us occasion to inquire into two things.

1. What is meant by the Unity of the Spirit. 2. How this Unity is preserved by Peace, and how we are to endeavour so to preserve it.

1. What is meant by the Unity of the Spirit? The Unity of the Spirit is that One-ness among Christians, which the Spirit of God worketh, or effecteth by the Gospel, which is the Ministration of the Spirit. For by the Spirits operation through that, Men become one in Faith or Perswasion, one in Profession, one in Affection, and one in Communion. And by their Union and agreement in these, or the three former of these, they become one Body or Spiritual Corporation under Christ the Head of it. *By one Spirit we are all Baptized into one Body, and are made to drink into one Spirit, 1 Cor. 12. 13. — For the work of the Ministry — till we all come to the Unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God Ephes. 4. 12, 13.*

1. They are, by the Spirit, made one
in

in faith or perswasion touching the great fundamental truths in the Christian Religion; such as the Apostle doth instance in, in the three following Verses: *Even as ye were called in one hope of your Calling; One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* First, they are all called by the Gospel to embrace Christianity, in *One Hope* of obtaining forgiveness of sins, and eternal Life. Secondly, they all agree in professing Faith in *One Lord Jesus Christ*, as the only Mediator, in opposition to the *Lords many*, the many Mediators the Heathen professed to have, and to worship, *1 Cor.* 8. 5, 6. Thirdly, they all agree in the Belief that the Doctrine of the Gospel by Christ, and his Apostles, contained in the Holy Scriptures, is a revelation from God touching what Men ought to *believe*, and how they ought to *live*; called the [*One Faith*,] and the *Common Faith*, from the Christians unanimous agreement in it, *Tit.* 1. 4. Fourthly, they all agree, and are one in the belief of *One God and Father of all*, in opposition to the many Idols worshipped by others. Fifthly, there is also *One Baptism*, by which all the Christians, with one consent, make

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profession solemnly of their belief in, and Dedication to the Worship and Service of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, into whose Name they were Baptized, and by which, as by a sacred Rite, they are solemnly declared to be of the *one Body*, the Church. *By one Spirit are all Baptized into one Body.*

2. They all agree, and are one, in the *Profession* of the *common Faith*, the fundamental Doctrines of the Gospel, the belief of which is of necessity to Salvation. Which Profession is called *The acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness*, Tit. 1. 1. 2 Tim. 2. 25. *The acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ* Col. 2. 2. As with the heart they believe unto Righteousness, so with the Mouth confession is made unto Salvation, Rom. 10. 10.

3. So far as they are Christians in deed, they are all one in affection, or Brotherly Love. They Love all Men, even those that are not Christians, with a love of compassion, desiring, and seeking their good; but they love their fellow Christians with a special kind of love, for the appearance of good in them, for their oneness with them in the Faith, called, *a loving, or the Truths sake which is in them*,
2 John

2 John 1. 2. And a *loving them in the*
Truth, Tit. 3. 15. By which they be-
come *One Heart*, and *one Soul*, *kindred toge-*
ther. Love. Act. 4. 32. Col. 2. 2. And
hence it is that *Faith in our Lord Jesus*
Christ, and *love to all the Saints*, are fre-
quently joyned together in Scrip-
ture.

4. All they that rightly be of the
Unity of the Spirit, are also one in Com-
munion. One in their Communion in
Grace: mutually loving one another, and
praying one for another: One in Com-
munion in *Gifts*, edifying one another as
they have opportunity: And one in
Communion in *Ordinances*; communica-
ting together in Ordinances of Divine
Worship, Spiritually with all, and locally
with those among whom they live; 1 Cor.
10. 17. *For we being many are one Bread,*
and one Body; for we are all partakers of that
one Bread.

These are the things in which the Unity
of the Spirit doth especially consist. Not
that I limit it to these only: for it is the
work of the Spirit, in the Gospel, to be
bringing the Believers to *speak all the*
same thing, and to be perfectly joyned together
in the same mind, and *in the same judgment*;
in the lesser things of Religion as well as

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the greater ; but their actual agreement lyeth mostly in the greater.

2. How this Unity is preserved by Peace, and how we are to endeavour so to preserve it.

Unity in the whole community of Christians, is preserved by each Member's observing the Laws and Rules made for the Government, and good Order of the whole in their carriage towards each other. For while every Man Acts his own part only, and keeps in his own Rank according to Rule, there is no confusion, no disturbance, no division : and peace and confusion, or disorder, are put in opposition to one another, 1 Cor. 14. 33. Christ, the Head of the Church, or Spiritual Corporation, hath made several excellent Laws and Rules, to govern the Members of his Body in their behaviour one towards another, for the common good of the whole, and for the Honour of their Religion, and of him who is the great Founder of it. As that all their things should be done in Charity : That they be gentle and courteous, humble and condescending, in Honour preferring one another : That they put on bowels of mercy and kindness : That they forbear one another in love : That the strong bear

bear the Infirmities of the weak: That they bear one anothers burthens: That they forgive one another: That they admonish, exhort, and comfort one another, as there is occasion: That they have the same care one for another: That they provoke not one another: That they lay no stumbling block in one anothers way: That all things be done to edifying: That they joyn together in solemn Acts of God's Worship as they have opportunity: That the Pastours Teach and Rule the People well, and that the People learn of them, and obey them; and the like.

Now, so far as these, and other like Laws are kept and observed, so far Peace and good Order is kept, and thereby Unity preserved. For there is no rent or division in the Body, till Men break the Laws of good Order. But so far as the Laws of good Order in the Christian Community are broken, so far the peace thereof is disturb'd; and to what degree the peace thereof is disturb'd, to that degree is the Unity thereof weakned, and threatened to be broken, if it be not thereby broken indeed. As for instance; in case part of the Members of this Community differ in their Opinions from the

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rest, about undetermined circumstances of Order or Worship; some holding these, and others holding those best to agree with general Rules: If then either the one or the other do urge, or impose their own apprehensions, or oppose the others that differ from them, to the apparent breach of the great Laws of Charity, and general edification; Then is the Churches peace thereby disturb'd, and the Unity thereof more or less broken; and then eminently so, when it proceeds to separation.

But when Christians that agree in the essentials of Christianity, do manage all their different apprehensions about lesser matters, especially about undetermined circumstances, and matters of doubtful disputation, with such Humility, Charity, Meekness, Gentleness, Tenderneſs, Condeſcention and forbearance, as is no ways apt to discover in them any slighting of their Brethren, or uncharitableness towards them, nor is any wayes apt to beget such like distempers in their Brethren towards themselves, to the interrupting of their mutual Communion; Then may they be truly said to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, though they otherwise differ in their thoughts

thoughts about such things : because by such a behaviour they observe the Laws of good Order, provided by our Lord and Master in such cases, as I shall shew more particularly afterwards.

In the mean time, by what hath been thus said in general, you may understand how we are to endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace ; and that is, by a prudent and careful keeping close to the Laws which our Blessed Saviour hath given those of his great Household, to govern themselves by, in their carriage one towards another, under all their different apprehensions and opinions in such like things as aforesaid.

And for the manner of endeavouring it ; The phrase and manner of speaking, used in Scripture in pressing this duty of Peace and Unity, plainly shews that the preservation or recovery of it, is most industriously to be endeavoured. *If it be possible, and as much as in you lyeth, live peaceably with all Men,* Rom. 12. 18. *Seek peace, and ensue it,* 1 Pet. 3. 11. *Follow Peace with all Men,* Heb. 12. 14. Though it flye from us, yet we must follow after it, and, if it be possible, overtake, and bring it back again. Nay, we are not only to follow after Peace, but also

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also to follow after the things that make for peace, that tend to it, *Rom. 14. 19.* And because this is that which I principally design in these Papers, I shall enlarge my Discourse the more about it. And what I shall say in shewing yet more particularly how we are to endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, may pass under the name of Directions thereabout, if you please.

I. *Direction.*

If we would endeavour it to purpose, we must lay the Foundation in the peaceable Government of our own Spirits, in Humility and Charity, banishing thence such passions and evil humours as will otherwise betray Men into unpeaceable practices, and make them disturbers of the Churches Peace; and, consequently, breakers of her Unity.

As first of all, we must lay aside Pride, and Vain-glory, and manage all our matters one with another, with lowliness of mind, meekness and modesty. For unchristian contention, which is contrary to Peace, springs from Pride and height of Spirit: *Only by Pride cometh contention,* saith Solomon, *Prov. 13. 10.* By Pride

a Man over-values himself, and under-values another: He over-values his own understanding, reasoning, and judgment; and as much slights and undervalues anothers. This makes him impatient of opposition, and to think hardly of them that will not bow to his reasonings, and judgment, and say as he says. The immoderate desire to maintain the reputation of his own judgment, of which he hath so high a conceit, makes him overlook, or but slightly consider what is offered by another in opposition to it, or differing from it. And hence arise immoderate and unpeaceable contentings; especially when the parties contending are both sick of one Disease; though the one may have a better cause in hand than the other. This St. Paul cautioned the Christians against, *Gal. 5. 26. Let us not be desirous of Vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.* When Men are ambitious, and vain-glorious, would be thought some body, or to appear considerable in the account of others, every little opposition is apt to provoke their passion: and they in that passion are apt again to say and do that which tends to provoke others. And when the fire is by this means kindled, it is not

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not easily quenched. For, *Where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work.* Jam. 3. 16.

But where Humility, Meekness, and Modesty of mind bear sway, there the Peace of the Church is in little danger of suffering by such. Such will esteem others better than themselves, when they are scarce their equals: they will have a better opinion of their wisdom and piety than of their own. And this disposes them to *look, not every Man on his own things, but also on the things of other*; and as impartially, and with as much fairness to consider and weigh what is offered by them, as what is offered by themselves, and to be as willing, and ready to receive, as to give satisfaction. St. Paul well knew how conducive such

to my purpose a ~~congrue~~ is to the peace and tranquillity of the Church, and to the comfort and benefit of Church-Communion, when he said, *Let nothing be done through strife, or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others,* Phil. 2. 3, 4. And if, after all this fairness of proceeding to give or to receive satisfaction, there yet remains a difference in judgment about things

things which are not of the essence of Christianity, yet there will be no unpeaceable striving, nor contending, no ill and provoking reflexions among such as are of this humble, and modest temper; but they will quietly, and patiently bear with one another in Love, as knowing themselves not to be infallible. *The Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, patient, in meekness; instructing those that oppose themselves, shewing a low meekness to all men;* 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. Tit. 3. 2. It was said of our Lord himself (who was meek, and lowly in heart) that *he shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets;* Mat. 12. 19. And if this way of proceeding will not reconcile the different-minded to our judgment, when we have truth on our side, much less will any thing that we can do in a more imperious, and passionate way of proceeding. For *the wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God:* It is no fit Instrument or Tool for that Work, *Jam. 1. 20.* Whereas by a patient, and peaceable forbearance, not only Unity in affection and Communion is preserved, but many times the dissenting party won upon, and brought to a better understanding. *By long forbearing is a Prince*
per-

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perswaded, and a soft Tongue breaketh the bone, Prov. 25. 15.

And as for Charlty, there is nothing qualifies a Man more to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace then this. The severall properties of it are described by St. Paul, in 1 Cor. 13. 4 — 7 Do, as it were, conspire, and naturally tend to promote peace and good agreement. To what degree Charity dwells in any Man, to that degree it disposeth him to *suffer long*, and to forbear revenge; to be *kind*, and ready to do good: and indisposeth him to *Envy* others in what they excell him; to *vaunt himself*, or to be *puffed up*; or to *behave himself unseemly*, or unbecomingly in word or deed, or to *seek his own*, with neglect of others benefit; or to be *easily provoked*: or to think or surmize *evil*, or to Interpret things to the worst sence, or to rejoyce in anothers halting, though an Adversary: but inclines him to *rejoyce in the Truth*, and when right, ~~to keep~~ place: It enables a Man to *bear with all things* in another so far as is consistent with his and the general good: to believe all things that are any wayes credible, that tend to excuse or commend others: To *hope all things*, and not to despair, but that a Neighbour may
by

by his Charitable endeavours be recovered, though he hath miscarried : and to *endure all things*, labour, pains, and many inconveniencies to himself, so he may but be serviceable to others. And if these be the properties of Charity, well may it be called the bond of perfectness, and Christians exhorted above all things to put it on. How can it be thought, that they can ever divide, or separate, in whom Love with these properties dwells ?

And as Charity is of a healing, so it is also of a comprehensive Nature : I can scarce propose any endeavours properly useful to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, but more or less of these properties of Charity will be found in them. And it is so universally useful for the right conduct of all affairs in the Church, that St. Paul gives it in charge thus, (1 Cor. 16. 14.) *Let all your things be done with Charity* : a line and vein of this should run through all. And if all Christians had but this *fast in themselves* (to allude to Mark 9.) it would so season their converse, that they would *have peace one with another*.

Where there is entireness of affection, and a peaceable correspondence among Christians, it makes them unwilling to differ

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differ from one another in judgment or practice. There is such a *comfort in Love* (as the phrase is, *Phil. 2. 1.*) that it makes them very unwilling to admit of any difference that may diminish that comfort, or weaken that love. And this disposeth them *to look, not on their own things only, but also on the things of others,* and to weigh, without prejudice or partiality, what each offers to other; which is the way to have the weaker brought over to the stronger, in any thing wherein they differ. And in this way doth the Church *edifie it self in love,* *Ephes. 4. 16,* *Being knit together in love, even unto all riches of full assurance of understanding,* as the phrase is, *Col. 2. 2.* And indeed, it is a common thing for one Man to be brought over to anothers judgment through affection to him, being prepared thereby to give his reasonings the greatest liberty and scope in his judgment. Whereas, on the contrary, it is a strong temptation to Men to differ from them in judgment and practice, from whom they have departed in affection. *St. Paul* could easily believe there were divisions in the Church of *Corinth*, when he fore-knew there would be Heresies among them, the one being the fore-runner of the other, and

and a lesser difference making way for a greater, as by sad experience we have seen in our dayes, *1 Cor. 11. 18, 19.* St. *Paul* observed it in some, who having first *swerved from Charity, they quickly turned aside unto vain jangling, 1 Timi. 1. 5, 6.* Whereas Love is the bond of perfectness, as it is called; it is the strongest bond, it holds the parts longest, and fastest together, *Col. 3. 14.* It being a Master grace, and of a benigne Nature, it hath a kindly influence upon a mans judgment and whole practice. *As the integrity of the upright doth guide them,* so will their Charity too. *He that loveth his Brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stum'ling in him, 1 Joh. 2. 10.* It is doubtless then more for want of love then want of light, when the Unity of the Spirit is not kept in the bond of peace.

This then is the first Direction: that we would by a diligent use of all good means and motives, cherish and nourish Humility and Charity in our minds and Spirits, as principles of such a peaceable behaviour, as directly tends to preserve Unity in the Church.

I I. *Direction.*

This Unity is to be endeavoured to be kept in the bond of Peace by all good Christians, by their being careful to abstain from *despising and censuring* one another upon account of their different apprehensions about the lesser things in Religion, so long as they are agreed in the main. Unless these be forborn in such cases, its next to an impossibility to preserve peace and Unity among them. These unchristian practices, as they are the effects of pride and uncharitableness, so they are, and have been two great peace-destroyers, and Church-dividers. There is, and ever hath been, and will be different measures of knowledge, understanding, and grace in the several Members of the same Body: Some are weak in the Faith, and some strong; some Babes, and some strong Men. Upon account of which difference of knowledge and grace, differences are apt more or less to arise among them. The weak are apt to be more scrupulous than the strong, as being more in the dark, and so apter to stumble. Whereupon the strong, if they be not restrained by Humility and Charity, are apt to despise them when they cannot make

make them understand what is plain and evident to them themselves. And the weak, again, if they be not restrained by Humility and Charity, are apt to judge and censure the strong, as if they were not so conscientious, because not so scrupulous as themselves. And upon this despising and judging one another, the bond of peace is broken, and a way prepared for dividing. For when the weak see themselves neglected, slighted, not regarded, and set at nought by the strong, it discourages them, and takes off the pleasure of their Society and Communion, and makes them weary of it, and becomes a temptation to them to forsake it, and to follow any opposite party that will head them. And when the strong, again, find themselves judged and censured by the weak, as if they were Men of little Conscience, they are apt to look upon themselves as being, by such prejudice taken up against them, put out of a capacity of serving them; which becomes a temptation to them to neglect them, and somewhat to estrange themselves from them: Or, however, though that temptation should not prevail so far upon them, yet all endeavours of the strong to help and cure the weak, are by the prejudice which

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the weak have against them when they once fall to judging them, made very much ineffectual; so mischievous and baneful to the Churches peace and Unity is proud despising, and uncharitable censuring one another.

This was the case between the believing Jews and Gentiles, upon which the first considerable breach we read of brake out in the Christian Church; of which we have an account in *Act. 15.* and *Rom. 14.* and other places. The believing Jews durst not use such liberty in meat as the believing Gentiles did: nor did the believing Gentiles think themselves obliged to be circumcised, and to observe Jewish Festivals, as the believing Jews thought they were. Hereupon the believing Gentiles which understood their Liberty, despised the believing Jews when they could not make them understand it too. And the believing Jews, on the other hand, fell to judging the believing Gentiles as looser than themselves, and as Men of no Conscience, because they did not make Conscience of Meats, and days of Circumcision, as well as themselves. And upon this unchristian carriage of one towards another under their different apprehensions in these things, great divisions,

divisions, sidings, and disturbances among them, did ensue.

Now, that all such despising and judging one another, and dividing from one another about their difference in lesser matters of doubtful disputation, should be forborn by Christians, so long as they agree in the essentials of Christianity, St. Paul declares, upon these two grounds, among others.

1. Because upon the Common Faith wherein they were both agreed, they were at the first received by the Lord into his Church, and so into a near Relation to himself. And therefore their after-differences which did not destroy that Foundation upon which that Relation was first built, were no sufficient ground of despising, or judging one another, or of dividing, or withdrawing one from another. This is plainly set down in these words: *Let him that eateth not despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth, for God hath received him*, Rom. 14. 3. And this reason is farther backed and urged again, Chap. 15. 7. *Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.* Those whom God hath received into his Church upon such and such

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grounds, we may not, we ought not to discourage, or reject, by despising, or judging, or withdrawing, so long as that remains in them upon which God at first received them. Which holds in all other cases of difference between Christians that agree in the main, as these did, as well as in this between the believing Jews and Gentiles. It is upon the like reason and ground that our Apostle, in the words upon which I found my discourse, and those following, (*Ephes. 4.*) presseth upon Christians the great duty of endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, *viz.* because they were at first incorporated into one Body by a profession and acknowledgment of one God and Father of all, of one Lord Jesus Christ, of one Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son, of one Doctrine of Faith, of one Hope, of one Baptism. Which fundamental points believed and lived to, are sufficient to Salvation. And if so, they are sufficient bonds of Union, and boundaries of Communion, whatever difference in lesser things may otherwise occur. For more, in profession, cannot be absolutely necessary to Church-Communion, then what in reality is absolutely necessary to Salvation.

tion. For as the one doth constitute the Church as invisible, so doth the other the Church as visible. And the same thing which constitutes the Church as visible, must needs invest the Members thereof in a right to its external priviledges. And if the Church had kept this her ground upon which she was first built, and not made more conditions of Communion, she had never been cut, mangled, and torn into (I know not how many) pieces, as she hath been, and at this day is. And I see not any probability of her recovery to her primitive Union and Communion, till she return to this her first Foundation of Union, and boundary of Communion. But a return to this would quickly do it, if all Christians would acquiesce therein. And why they should not as well as the primitive Christians [the best Christians that ever the World saw] did, I understand not, nor ever could hear any good reason to make me understand it.

2. St. Pauls other reason, why Christians that agree in the main, as aforesaid, should not despise, or judge, or withdraw from one another, for their differing in lesser things, is this: because both parties differing but only so, are to be presumed, in the judgment of Charity, to aim

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at the pleasing of God in what they differently hold and do. For Charity, according to which we are to guide our selves in all such cases of difference, *thinketh no evil*, but *believeth*, and *hopeth all things* concerning others, in the best sense and construction their Actions are capable of. This was the case of the believing Jews and Gentiles; they both aimed at the pleasing of God even in those things wherein they differed. *He that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth eateth to the Lord, (saith he) for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks,* Rom. 14. 6. Both aimed at the approving themselves to God in their contrary wayes. And if the Lord in such a case will not despise, or judge such an one, so as to condemn him, though under a mistake but of that Nature, as certainly he will not, but pity and pardon him, (*for he hath compassion on them that are ignorant, and out of the way*) much less should we, who are fallible our selves, and compassed about with infirmities. *Who art thou that judgest another mans Servant? (saith our Apostle) to his own Master he standeth*

standeth or falleth: every one of us shall give an account of himself to God: Let us not therefore judge one another any more, ver.

4. 12, 13. for that is a judgment belongs not unto us. *here is one Law-giver, and one Judge*; who art thou that judgest another? *Jam. 4. 12.* That is, what dost thou make thy self to be, that dardest to undertake such a thing?

And as we should be afraid to judge one another, so we should of despising one another in any case like that before mentioned; for our Saviours serious caveat against it, argues it to be both much against his mind, and of dangerous consequence to our selves and others: *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little Ones, Mat. 18. 10.* He knew that his little Ones, because but little Ones in knowledge and grace, that have little of these to render their fellowship much desirable, are apt to be neglected and slighted, and to be thereby discouraged, and turned aside: he therefore cautions these that are stronger, to take heed lest they should be betrayed into any carriage towards them as signifies their slighting of them. Our Saviour had shewed before, how sad a thing it would be for any Man to be instrumental in turning any
weak

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weak Christian aside by any undue carriage towards him, when he said, in ver. 6. *Wo be to the World because of offences, &c. and wo be to him by whom the offence cometh.* And it would be far more Christ-like (of whom it is said, *He shall not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax*) to use more care, pains, and tenderness towards the weak and feeble, to preserve and increase that little spark of Christianity in them, though it be no more, and though there be no more appearance of it, than there is of fire when only smoak can be discerned, then towards those that are strong, and do not stand in so very much need of tenderness in our carriage, and applications to them. Which also agrees excellently well with St. Paul's Metaphorical Discourse, in 1 Cor. 12. 23, 24, 25. *Those Members of the Body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the Body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked, that there should be no Schism in the Body: implying, that certainly there will be, where such care, & tenderness of proceeding*

ceeding is not used towards such as are least accounted of in the Church. *Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet* (by removing all discouraging impediments out of the way) *lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but rather let it be healed: looking diligently, lest any fail of the grace of God,* Heb. 12. 12, 13, 15. How far all parties of Men among us have made themselves guilty of breaking the Peace and Unity of the Church, by this unchristian despising, and judging one another, concerns them to consider; and the guilty to repent of what is past, and to reform for time to come, that they may not be judged and condemned by God for what they have done. That's the second Direction.

III. *Direction.*

Those that would keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, must be careful to forbear all hard speeches, and ill reflexions on them that differ from them; especially tale-bearing, back-biting, and whispering. They must make no ill representation of one another behind their backs, by raking up,
and

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and then scattering abroad all the evil they can, or whatever may tend to the disparagement, or reproach of such as differ from them. Because, if they should be guilty herein, though they may think thereby to weaken the Reputation of the Cause they oppose, yet in truth they will be so far from reconciling their Opponent to *their* Cause, as that they will thereby dishonour it, and render it the more suspected ; and Communion with themselves so much the less desirable, and all their own arguings the less available, and by-standers the readier to fall in with those of a better behaviour, as judging thereby their Cause to be better, though in it self it should be worse : for a good Cause may be spoiled in the handling. All such unchristian carriage tends to exasperate, embitter, and provoke the Spirits of their Opponents, both against them and their Cause, and to widen the breach more and more, and to set them at the greater distance, and to make them the more irreconcilable. *A froward Man soweth strife* (saith the Wise man) *Prov. 26. 28. Grievous words stir up anger, and the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife : and the words of a tale-bearer are as wounds,* *Prov. 15. 1. and 26. 22. and 30. 33.* So true

true it is that *the wrath of man doth not work the Righteousness of God*, Jam. 1. 20. It is not for the interest of the Truth, nor doth it any wayes advantage the cause of God. No, if any Man would see any good effect of his endeavours towards the Uniting of Men, if he would see the Seed he sows come up; let him be sure to avoid all harsh and unpeaceable proceedings therein. *The Fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace of them that make Peace*, Jam. 3. 18. *The Servant of God must not strive, but be gentle to all*, 2 Tim. 2. 24. As we must follow Peace with all Men, *Heb. 12. 14.* So, in order thereto, we must *speak evil of no Man*, Tit. 3. 2.

IV. Direction.

In Order to our keeping the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, we must study rather to agree with, than to differ from one another: and be more solicitous to find out what will bring us nearer together, than what will set us at a greater distance. And this is one way of *following after the things which make for peace; and of studying to be quiet; to both which we are exhorted, Rom. 14. 20. 1 Thes. 4. 11.* And to this end, I shall recommend these three things.

I. To

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1. To make Conscience of endeavouring as truly and sincerely to find out what may make us of their mind that differ from us, if it be to be found out, as what may tend to make them of our mind. We should be as much afraid of offending against the publick Peace, and Charity of the Church, as against Truth; of being guilty of Schism in practice, as of error in judgment; and take as much pains to keep our selves from a causeless differing from others, as to make them agree with us.

2. That we do as impartially weigh what those that differ from us do offer for our satisfaction, as what we our selves do offer to satisfy them. In doing of which we shall in part discharge that duty enjoined us, in *Phil.* 2. 4. Look not every Man on his own things, but every Man also on the things of others. And by this we shall make it appear, that we are willing to agree with those that differ from us, as far as possibly we can, as far as any reason or ground appears to bear us out in so doing. And if we herein begin to those which differ from us, it will induce them, if there be any candor in them, to return the like to us. And this is the way to reduce the difference to

a narrow compass, and to make it as little as may be. And when it appears to be but little, it will be the easier to satisfy one another about it: or, however, we shall then be the better able peaceably to bear with one another in it. But if this be not done, it will beget a suspicion that we affect to differ, and to strive for Victory more than for Truth and Peace; and that it is more from a spirit of contradiction than Conscience, that we differ.

3. When any alter their judgment either upon grounds found out by their own search and studies, or offered to them by others, so that they come over to them in whole, or in part, from whom they differed before, then beware of representing this as matter of *Odium* and reproach to them, so long as they are not worse in their Morals. The contrary, that is, the doing so, hath been an ill practice, and such as hath tended greatly to block up the way of a due, and Christian compliance with them from whom, through mistake, they have once professedly differed. While it hath been represented as matter of reproach to Men, not to stand their ground, and to be true to their principles they have once received, though found erroneous enough
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when better considered and looked into, it hath proved a great temptation doubtless unto many, to neglect an impartial and thorow-examination of the grounds of their Opinion or practice, and to be prejudiced against all that is offered by others to convince them of mistake. Mens Reputation among their party is a dangerous snare to hold them fast in error, and a great impediment to their understanding, and discerning the Truth when it is declared to them, when it tends to draw them off, and to expose them to reproach among their party, and a great prejudice and bar against their receiving and owning of it. *Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word,* said our Saviour to the Jews, *John 8. 43.* They had no mind to embrace his Doctrine, which would bring them into disgrace with their party, the Pharisees, and therefore they had no mind so to consider it, as to understand it. Which made our Saviour say again, *How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? Joh. 5. 44.* But if Men would but understand, and consider that it is truly honourable, and praise-worthy in the sight of God, and Wise Men, to love
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and own Truth where ever they find it, and however disguised by its Adversaries, and to be of open and free minds to consider, and try all things, and when they discover Truth, to buy it at any rate, though it cost them more than the loss of their Reputation among an erring party; they would then neither fright others, nor be scared themselves from exchanging error for Truth, Schism for Peace and Unity, by reproachful nick-names.

V. Direction.

Those that would keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, had need to be of publick Spirits, and still to seek their own personal and private satisfaction in subordination to a publick good, and not in opposition to it: to preserve the publick Peace and Unity of the Church, and the benefits that depend thereon, before the pleasing of themselves in things not absolutely necessary, but convenient only. If this be not observed, there will be no avoiding divisions and separations. And the Reason hereof is taken from the different apprehensions, capacities, and tempers of the several parts and Members of the Church. By

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reason of this, those circumstances about the administration of Holy things, which will best please some good Men, will not so well satisfy others. This we find to be true by the different usages of the parts of the Reformed Church in several Nations, and by the different persuasions and inclinations of the parts of the Church in one and the same Nation, yea, in one and the same City, Town, and Parish, as is well known. So that, if one part of the Church should refuse Communion with the other in the same Ordinances, unless they can have them administered upon terms best pleasing to themselves; and if the other part of the Church, of a different opinion therein, should do so too; separation follows of course, till they can all be of one mind in those disputable things.

But in all such cases the publick concerns of Religion should sway more with us, than what otherwise would be more to our liking. The profit of the whole is more to be attended, than the pleasing of our selves, when the question is not, which is good, and which is simply bad, this or that? But only, which is better, this or that? *St. Paul* walked by this Rule, in bearing with, yea, in choosing some

some things for publick edification sake, when circumstances made them necessary thereunto, which out of those circumstances he would not have chosen, nor could well bear with. *Even as I* (saith he) *please all Men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved,* 1 Cor. 10. 33. Under some circumstances he would forbear things, which under others he would not : and thus he would *eat no meat while the World stands, rather than make his Brother to offend.* He chose to labour with his own hands for his support, rather than to take Money from others when he saw the interest of the Christian Religion would be disadvantaged thereby. And he Circumcised *Timothy*, purified himself, and took on him a Vow, after the Jewish mode, when so to do tended to publick good, though otherwise the doing of such things could not be without some regret to him, considering how slightly he speaks of them at other turns. And thus he took up and laid down many things, even as the publick interest of Religion lead him to it. To them that were under the Law, he became as one under the Law; and as without *Moses's Law* to them that were without it : and all this

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he reckoned to be consistent with his being *under the Law to Christ*. To the weak he became as weak, that he might gain the weak : he was made all things to all men, but it was *for the Gospels sake*, as he saith ; and that he might by all means save some : it was, that he might gain the freer passage and readier reception of the gospel, for the Salvation of men, *1 Cor. 9. 2. 23.* And accordingly he exhorted others to walk by the same rule, and to consider, and do, what would best consist with publick benefit, rather than what would best please and gratifie themselves. *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves, Rom. 15. 1.* Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others, *Phil 2. 4.*

If Christians on all hands among us had but acted and walked according to this rule; nay, if the dissenters would but have done it when the other could not be prevailed with ; the publick interest of Religion would not have been exposed to that loss and dammage as it is at this day. And therefore, as that publick benefit which might have been procured, and secured by such yielding and condescending as circumstances made not only Lawful, but

but necessary, might have been a forcible motive so to have done: so the publick damage and mischief which a non-compliance under our circumstances tends to, may, and ought also to be a powerful dissuasive from maintaining, and continuing our distance upon such slight grounds as those are which have brought us to it. For such a distance tends to keep open a wide breach in the Body of the Nation, to the weakening of it, and rendering it obnoxious to the Envy, ill will, or ambition of any publick Adversary; or to create one if there were none: it tends to the dishonour and reproach of the Nation: it tends to weaken the Protestant interest, and to bring a scandal and reproach upon our Religion it self, and to put an Advantage into the hands of the Adversaries of it: it tends to lay a stumbling-block in the way of such as are Atheistically inclined: it tends to distract, and unsettle the Peoples minds about the more necessary points of Religion; or, at least, to divert them from the serious practice of them: and it tends to the distraction of Christian Charity. And that which tends to any one of these, tends to a publick hurt and damage; how much more that which tends to them all?

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And in good sadness, are the things on either hand about which we differ, of such necessity or value, as that for the sake thereof the publick interest of Religion, and of the Nation, should run such hazards, and sustain such apparent damage by contending for them as they do? Or, can it be thought, when seriously considered, that God, who hath said, *I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice; and the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings* (which yet were his own institutions) is such a lover of those things which are but circumstances of institutions at most, wherein our difference as to communion of private Members lies, as that he had rather the interest of Religion in the main, and of National Societies of Men should deeply suffer, then that those circumstances should be either waved, or born withall? Me-thinks, those who have not Love and Zeal enough for Religion to be restrained from such dividing wayes and practices as evidently tend to its great prejudice, should yet be restrained therefrom upon account of their own secular interest, as that is exposed thereby to great hazards, as that is involved in the common Fate of the Nation; alwayes remembering who hath said, *A Nation dividet*

divided against it self, is brought to desolation.

VI. *Direction.*

Those that would keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, had need to be careful not to impose upon their Christian Brethren, as conditions of communion, things of doubtful disputation, or which are not some way necessary to further the great ends of Religion. Because, though some such things may not be unlawful in themselves, yet so long as they are thought to be so by many, it will occasion a breach, as experience shews that from time to time it hath done. And when the imposition of any thing that is apt to do so, may be forborn without any detriment to Christianity in its end or means, without any dishonour to God, or wrong to Mens Souls; it seems altogether incongruous, then to impose it. When the believing Gentiles would impose upon the believing Jews to use the same Liberty in Meat which they themselves did, when those Jews were perswaded it was unlawful for them so to do: and when, again, the believing Jews would impose upon the believing Gentiles

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the observation of dayes, and other legal Rites which the Gentiles scrupled, and that they fell to judging one another hereupon; St. *Paul* interposed, and directed, and perswaded them, that instead of this, they would judge this rather, as better becoming them, that *no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his Brothers way*: that they would not by impositions, tempt one another to do that which they could not do with satisfaction of Conscience, or else to separate: And to put one another upon a necessity of doing either the one or the other, argued great uncharitableness, *Rom. 14. 13.* And when he had, in ver. 1. exhorted the strong to receive the weak into their communion, he cautions them, that by no means they would trouble them with matters of doubtful disputation.

That agreement of Christians in the substance of Doctrine and Worship, upon which they became one Body at the first, is doubtless sufficient, without any addition, to continue that Union in communion. And upon this very thing was the Communion of the Apostolical Churches Founded: And the going off from this, and the adding such conditions of Communion as are not found in Scripture,

Scripture, hath been Fatal to the Churches Peace, and that which hath, from time to time, broken it into pieces. Men should alwayes make choice of means fitted to their end. And therefore those who design the establishing of Peace and Unity in the Church, should beware of imposing such things on their Brethren as are like to prove a bone of contention, when they may be forborn without prejudice to any. The contrary many times proves (as I have said) very mischievous to the Church. As Parents tempt their Children to withdraw that reverence and obedience which is due in things necessary, by imposing upon them unnecessarily, out of humour, (against which they are cautioned, *Col. 4.*) So Mens greater Extravagancies in the Church, frequently take their first rise from the imposing of such things on them which might well have been forborn.

In the choice of Circumstances about Worship wherein there is a liberty of choice, it would alwayes, for Peace and Unity sake, be considered, what the People are able to bear: a thing which our first Reformers had an eye to; and *Moses* would never have permitted divorce, but that the temper of the people
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lead him to it : *He suffered it for the hardness of their hearts.* Our Saviour also in his conduct had respect to the capacity and temper of the People ; he preached to them *as they were able to bear*, Mar. 4. 33. And did forbear to declare many things to his Disciples which he had to say, *Because they could not bear them then*, John 16. 12.

Christians of all Capacities, whether their standing be higher or lower in the Church, are to do nothing to one another, but what doth well consist with Love. The precept is Universal both in respect of Persons and things : *Let all your things be done with Charity*, 1. Cor. 16. 14. *By Love serve one another*, Gal. 5. 13. *Forbearing one another in Love*, Ephes. 4. 2. The very severities of Excommunication are to proceed from Love to the delinquents soul ; *That the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*. And therefore nothing should be imposed that favours of want of Love or tenderness ; No burdening of one anothers Consciences, but rather *bearing one anothers burthens*, and so fulfilling the Law of Christ : Imitating St. Paul, who said, *I was gentle among you, even as a Nurse cherisheth her Children*. And without doubt, this
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is the best method to preserve and increase Peace, Love, and Unity, and the edification of the Church; *Eph.* 4. 16. Edifying it self in Love.

VII. Direction.

Those that would endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, as they ought, must not so contend on any side for external circumstances about the administration of holy things, as thereby to expose the substantial of Christianity, Peace, Charity, and Unity, to ruine and destruction. For the preservation of that which is most essential to the keeping of the Unity of the Spirit, as Peace and Charity are, is more to be endeavoured, than the retaining what is but circumstantial to it, as a more or less convenient mode of Administration is. The Unity of the Spirit may be kept in the use of a less convenient mode of Administration, when a more convenient cannot be had without the loss of Peace, Charity, and Unity: but the Unity of the Spirit cannot be kept where Peace and Charity are banished.

Peace, Charity, and Unity, are duties
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of a higher Nature than circumstances about Administrations that are not absolutely necessary, but only more convenient. To love our Neighbour as our selves, is *the Royal Law*, (Jam. 2. 10.) one of the two great Commandments, (Mat. 22. 39.) *the fulfilling of the Law*, (Rom. 13. 10.) *the more excellent way*, (1 Cor. 12. 31.) greater than Faith or Hope, 1 Cor. 13. last ver. And so, Peace is that in which, together with Righteousness, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, the Kingdome of God consists, (Rom. 14. 17.) and which is to *Rule* in our hearts, and to over-rule in many cases, Col. 3. 15. Charity and Peace are great Moral duties, in which much of the Christian Religion, in the power of it, doth consist, as being that wherein a Man most resembles God, and by which God dwells in him, and he in God, 1 Joh. 4. 16. And when these fall into competition with circumstances relating not to the being, but only to the better constitution of Churches and Ministry, and the Administration of Ordinances in a better mode, and to the better exercise of discipline and government; they are to give place to Peace, Love, and Unity; and not Peace, Love, and Unity, to them.

I. Because

1. Because those are but means subordinate and subservient to these as their end : and the means, as such, are no farther useful than they are serviceable to their end. Which may be the reason why washing of Saints feet, the ~~gifts~~ *kiss* of Charity, the anointing the Sick with Oyl in the Name of the Lord, have been dis-used, though otherwise once enjoined.

2. Those controverted points about the betterness of wayes and modes of Administration, on which side soever the Truth falls, are not things wherein the glory of God, the Honour and success of Religion, and the good and Salvation of Men are so much concerned, as they are in the great duties of Love, Peace, and Unity, and what depends upon these: and therefore it must needs be a duty of a higher Nature, and of greater obligation, to secure and promote Love, Peace, and Unity, which are the greater, than the betterness of Modes of Administration, which are but the less. And a Man's duty in the less is to be pleaded only in subordination to his duty in the greater, but never in opposition to it. And therefore well might St. Paul say, [*above all these things*] *put on Charity,*
which

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which is the bond of perfectness, Col. 3. 14. And St. Peter likewise: [above all things] have fervent Charity among your selves. 1 Pet. 4. 12. And if above all things; then above the circumstances relating to the constitution of Churches, to Ministry, Administration of Holy things, and discipline. I might both amplifie, and exemplifie this, and over-prove it, in shewing how that duties which become so only by institution, are alwayes to give way to Moral duties, when they come in competition. I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice, Hos. 6. 6. Mat. 9. 13. and 12. 7. Go, and be first reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy gift; Mat. 5. 24. Circumcision waited upon, and was suspended, upon a Moral necessity, forty years in the Wilderness, being intermitted so long, Josh. 5. Now then, if positive precepts themselves are superseded by Moral, when they come into competition; then so are those things much more which are but circumstances relating to institutions, and such circumstances too, as that it is matter of dispute among Wise and good Men on both sides, which, whether these or those, do best agree with the Nature and ends of those institutions.

Now,

Now, that our dividing, separating, and running into parties, upon the account of the lesser things fore-mentioned, does tend to the decay and destruction of Love, as well as Peace and Unity, is a thing too apparent in our own experience, to need proof. That which is an occasion of separation, will certainly lessen, if it do not quite destroy Love. The Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances, which was a Wall of Separation, or partition, between Jews and Gentiles, is called the *Enmity*, Ephes. 2. 15. Because, as it did separate them, it was the cause of enmity, and laid waste Charity, as all separation upon a Religious account ever hath done, more or less. And to deny this, whatever one of late hath said to the contrary, is to contradict the general sense and experience of Men. And therefore what is our dividing upon the terms before described, but a Method of seeking to purchase little things in Religion with the loss of great? Of securing Circumstances, with the loss of substance; of obtaining supposed conveniencies, with the loss of what is certainly, and absolutely necessary: it is as if they should have Robbed the Temple to build a Synagogue. And I fear this will be found an
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ill way of trading with our Master's Talents, and such as will turn but to a bad account, when profit and loss is computed. The want of a due care to prefer Charity before things less considerable, hath betrayed many a one into that which St. Paul calls vain jangling, 1 Tim. 1. 5, 6. *The end of the Commandment (saith he) is Charity, from which some having swerved (or not aiming at, as it is in the Margin,) have turned aside to vain jangling.*

VIII. *Direction.*

To the keeping of the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, its greatly necessary to take heed of dividing Principles. Because these especially are the spring of irregular motion, of breaking asunder instead of Uniting. There are indeed other causes of unlawful divisions and separations; but they scarce ever proceed to any height in producing such effects, without this. Pride, Self-conceitedness, Uncharitableness, and affection of singularity, are also causes of this evil: but these usually Act under the colour of some one or more mistaken Principles. I shall instance in some of them, and insist
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the longer upon them, because they are the Weapons in which Church-Dividers do usually put their trust. Some of them relate to the qualification of Church-Members, and the constitution of Churches: some to the Worship performed in Churches; and some to the Magistrates Authority enjoyning that Worship. I shall begin with what concerns the qualification of Persons of which Churches are constituted.

I. Dividing Principle to be avoided.

That Churches Founded in Infant-Baptism, are not to be held Communion with.

This tenet is built upon a supposition that Baptism administred to Infants is a *Nullity*, is invalid, and no Baptism, and that therefore Churches made up of Pedobaptists, are no true Churches. To this I have two things to say. 1. That they of this way, will never be able to prove Infant-Baptism a Nullity. 2. That if they could prove it an error, yet they cannot prove it to be an error of that Nature, as will be a sufficient ground of separation.

First, they will never be able to prove

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it a Nullity, and till they do prove it to be so, they will never be able to justify separation upon account of it. For if they pronounce them no true Churches, and renounce Communion with them upon that account, they must prove their charge, or lye under the blame of a false accusation, and an unjust separation. It lyes on their part to prove their refusing Church-communion with such, to have a sufficient ground to justify their practice. If ever they prove Baptism administred to the Infants of Believers to be a Nullity, it must be, 1. By disproving their Church-Relation. And, 2. By proving their exclusion out of Christ's Commission to Baptize; and thirdly, by proving that the ends of Baptism are not attained, when administred to them. And that they are never like to do this, consider what I have to offer to make you think so.

1. That they cannot disprove such to be of the Church, if they should attempt it, I have two things to lay in their way.

First, that the same Jewish Children which were visibly of the Church immediately before their Parents became Christians at the first,
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continued to be so after. The reason of which affection is this; Because they were not under the dischurcing cause of as many of the Jews as were dischurched, and that was unbelief, and wilful disobedience in rejecting the Gospel; of which they could not be guilty by any Act of their own, or of their Parents, as imputed to them. *Because of unbelief, saith St. Paul, they were broken off, Rom. 11. 20. See also John 8. 35.* If it be said they were dischurched in the dissolution of the Jewish Church-state in general; it is but an evasion which will not help them: for the fore-cited Text is flatly against them. For all that were not broken off by unbelief, did continue unbroken off; that is, they still kept their place and standing in the Church of God. And therefore to assign any other cause of dischurcing any than the Scripture hath assigned; or, at least, any other without this here assigned and determined by the Apostle, is too great presumption, and such as will not satisfy an impartial mind.

Secondly, our Saviour hath declared, little Children to be of the Church, when he said, *of such is the Kingdom of Heaven,* Mat. 19. 14. If any by Kingdome of

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Heaven have a mind to understand it of the Kingdom of Glory, yet they may remember, that none are of the Kingdome of Glory, who were not first of the Church, first of the Kingdome of Grace here. So that it comes all to one, understand it of which you will.

If they shall say, that by *Such*, here is not meant such in age, but such in quality, such as are like Children in Humility and Innocency: The scope of the place, and the purpose to which the words are applied, will not suffer them so to understand them. For the words, of such is the Kingdome of Heaven, are our Saviour's reason by which he would take off his Disciples from hindering little Children, properly taken, from being brought unto him, and of justifying their practice that brought them. *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not*, saith he, *for of such is the Kingdome of Heaven*. And if we should understand by such, not such Children properly, but Men, like such in quality, we destroy the force and sence of our Saviour's reason, and render it wholly insequent. For it doth not follow at all that because the Kingdome of Heaven is of other Persons like little Children in some other things, but altogether

altogether unlike them in what was the matter of exception against their being brought to Christ, which was their minority or infancy, that therefore little Children properly understood, ought to be suffered, and not forbidden to be brought to Christ. Such a rendring the fence would fasten a fallacy of four terms on our Saviour's words, of putting one thing in the premises, and another in the conclusion, as you will see if you cast them into a syllogism.

Besides, our Saviour plainly declared the Relation of little Children to himself, when, at another time, he taking a little Child, said, *Whosoever receiveth [this] little Child in my Name, receiveth me.* Lnk. 9. 48. For how could a little Child be received in his Name, if it were not visibly related to him? To receive one in Christ's Name, and to receive one because he belongs to Christ, is one and the same thing, *Mark 9. 41.*

1. If such Children then are of the Church, and Related to Christ; to Baptize them, cannot be proved unlawful. And the reason is, because the same thing which qualifies any Persons for Church-Member-ship, qualifies them for Baptism. And Baptism is a sacred Rite of Christi-

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anity instituted by Christ, solemnly to publish and declare such to be of the Church as are Baptized: it is a Christian badge to declare to whom they do belong. There is one Body, and one Baptism for all of that one Body, *Ephes. 4. 4, 5. 1 Cor. 12. 13.*

2. If the Infants of believing Parents be of the Church, it cannot be proved that they are excluded out of Christ's Commission to be Baptized, *Mat. 28. 18.* And the reason is plain, because they can never be disproved to be Disciples of Christ in one sense or other, that are visibly of the Church. For the Church is Christ's School: and all that are of the Church, are Christ's Scholars. If they say, Infants are no Disciples, because they are not in a capacity to learn; I answer. Although they are not in the properest, and nearest capacity to learn, yet it doth not therefore follow, that they are in no such capacity of it, as that they may be called, and reputed to be Disciples, or Learners. The Scripture useth to reckon, or impute the doing of things to Children, when yet they have been but in as remote a capacity of doing those things themselves, as they are of Learning. Thus little Children
were

were said to enter into Covenant, *Deut.* 29. 11, 12. to keep Covenant, and to break Covenant, *Gen.* 17, 10. 14: And the Children of the *Kohobites* of a month old, were said to keep the charge of the Sanctuary, *Numb.* 3. 28. And *Levi* to pay Tithes in *Abraham*, while he was yet in his Loins, *Heb.* 7. 9, 10. Doubtless, they were said to do these things, either because they did them virtually in their Parents, as being morally one with them untill they could chuse for themselves: Or else, because they were under visible Circumstances of being certainly taught by their Parents to do them themselves, when they should be in the nearest, and properest capacity so to do, and to own what their Parents had done on their behalf in the mean time, as much as if they had done it in their own Persons, But for whether of these reasons, or for both, or for any other they were said to do such things while but Children, for the same reasons may little Children while but such, be as truly said to be Disciples or Learners. And upon one account or other, Children as well as Parents, are called Disciples, in *Act.* 15. 10. Where somes urging the necessity of the Gentiles being Circumcised after the manner

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of *Moses*, that is, to be profelyted by Circumcision, is called, a laying a yolk upon the neck of the Disciples. Seeing then, the manner of *Moses* was to Circumcise Profelytes, both Fathers, and Male Children, and the pressing the continuance of this among all Gentiles Profelyted to Christianity, is called, a putting a yolk upon the neck of the Disciples; it is impossible to prove but that the Children, as well as the Fathers, are meant by the Disciples, upon whose neck the yolk would have been laid, because it is manifest they, as well as their Fathers, were the Persons, whose Circumcision was urged as necessary. For these reasons I conclude they will never be able to prove little Children to be no Disciples: and if not, they can never be able to prove them excluded out of Christ's Commission for Baptizing Disciples.

3. They cannot prove that the ends of Baptism are not attained when Administered to Infants of Believing Parents. First, one great end of Baptism, is to signifie to all Men by visible sign and representation, the same thing which Gods Covenant in the Gospel doth by Word. Baptism conveys to the mind by the sense of seeing, the same thing as the word of
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the Gospel doth by the sense of hearing, which is the Covenant of Salvation, or the terms on which God hath promised to save Men. Christ's Death, Burial, and Resurrection, as the means by which pardon and Salvation are conditionally obtained for, and promised to all Men, are signified in Baptism. And our dying unto sin and rising to a new Life, as the condition upon which that pardon and Salvation are promised, are likewise signified in Baptism. Hence we are said to be buried with Christ in Baptism into Death, and to be raised with him, *Rom. 6. 3, 4, 5, 6. Col. 2. 12.* And to be saved as by a figure by Baptism, as it signifies the Resurrection of Christ, and the answer of a good Conscience, *1 Pet. 3. 21.* And because the substance of the new Covenant is represented in Baptism; thence it is that Baptism is called the sign of the Covenant. And because it is an institution of God to assure Men that upon the terms signified by it, they shall be pardoned, and saved, thence it is called the Seal of the Covenant, as Circumcision for the like reason was. For Circumcision was a sign to signify upon what condition God promised Men to be their God, and a Seal to assure them that
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upon their performing that Condition, he would be their God. And the Condition signified was Circumcision in the Spirit, as St. *Paul* expounds it, *Rom. 2. 28, 29.* that is, mortification, or the change of the heart, the same for substance with the new Birth, represented in Baptism. But then Baptism no more than Circumcision, doth signifie that all that have received it, have performed the Condition of the promise of Salvation therein signified, but to assure them and all others, that upon the performance of it, the benefits promised shall be conferred. For the sign of the Covenant doth not signifie more to Men than the Covenant it self: and the Covenant it self doth not signifie to Men that they have performed the Condition of it. As to this end then, as Circumcision was of a publick and common use to the Females as well as the Males, though they were not circumcised themselves; so is Baptism much more both to the Persons themselves who are Baptized, and to all others, as well when it is administred to Children, as when to Men of riper years.

2. Another end of Baptism is to oblige the Persons Baptized to perform the Condition of the Covenant in being born again.

again, of making them new hearts, and becoming new Creatures, as ever they hope to receive the benefits of pardon and Salvation, promised in the Covenant upon that Condition. It is from this Obligation that a holy Life is frequently pressed upon Christians from their having been Baptized, and that it is called, the *Baptism unto Repentance*, Rom. 6. Col. 2 and 3 Chap. Mark 1. And Baptism can be no less an Obligation to Repentance and a Holy Life when administered to Infants, than Circumcision was in like case: and yet St. Paul said, that whosoever was Circumcised, was bound to keep the Law, Gal. 5. And those Baptized in their Infancy, if when they come to years of discretion, do prove such as make Conscience of their own personal Obligation, they usually take themselves to be as much obliged by their Infant-Baptism, as they do who are Baptized at years of discretion, and discharge it as well. All which considered, Infant-Baptism cannot be proved a Nullity as to this end neither.

3. Another end of Baptism, if it be not the same with that before mentioned, is a solemn dedication of the person Baptized, to the Worship and Service of
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the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, called a being Baptized in the Name, or into the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *Mat. 28.* And is not such an Act done by Parents as obliging to their Children, as that of the Jews was when *they took upon them, and decreed for their Seed, that they should keep the dayes of purim?* And as that of *Sampson's* Parents was in devoting him to be a *Nazarite* from the womb, *Eft. 9. 27, 28, 31. Judges 16. 17.* Or, as the Parents Covenant with the *Gileonites*, was to their Children after them. Or, as *David's* and *Jonathan's* was to their Seed, *1 Sam. 20. 42.* Or, as the Fathers Act in Circumcising his Child, was obliging to the Child afterwards to keep the Law.

4. Another end and use of Baptism is solemnly to declare such to be of the Church, who are Baptized, and to signify their right to Church-priviledges, and as the Christian badge to be a mark of distinction between compleat Members of the Church, and those which are not; even as Circumcision was of old. Infants are as capable of these ends by Baptism, as they formerly were by Circumcision.

If it be said, there may be other ends
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of Baptism that cannot be attained in Infants Baptism, as they may in the Baptism of those of riper years : yet, if this be granted, it will not therefore follow, that their Baptism is a Nullity, so long as other ends of Baptism are attained thereby. It might as well be said, that more ends of Circumcision were attainable in the Circumcision of grown Profelytes than of Minor Profelytes : but if there were, it did not make their Circumcision Null. Our Saviour did not by his Personal Baptism profess Repentance and Mortification of any sin of his, and belief of pardon of it, (as many others did of their sins in their Baptism) because he had none to repent of, to mortifie, or to be pardoned : and yet I hope none will say his Baptism was a Nullity. And if the absence of such a profession did not make his Baptism a Nullity, how can it be proved that the absence of it will make the Baptism of Infants to be a Nullity ? The absence of one end of Baptism, doth no more make it useles as to all other ends, and, consequently, no more a Nullity, then all such Marriages are Nullities where procreation of Children, which is one end of Marriage, is not attainable.

Now

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Now then, considering what hath been said about Infants Church-Membership, and Disciple-ship, and the attainableness of the ends of Baptism in their Baptism, I appeal to all who are not over-grown with prejudice and partiality, whether ever Infant-Baptism be like to be proved to be a Nullity: And if not, whether separation upon supposition that it is, be not a causeless rent in the Church, which is Schism in the formality of it.

But besides all this, I have another thing in the second place to say, and that is, that if Infant-Baptism could be proved an error, yet it can never be proved to be an error of that Nature as will of it self, and without any other cause, be a sufficient ground of separation, as to other Acts of Church-Communion. To make this out, I shall take one thing for granted, which I believe very few, if any, of the Anabaptists will deny, and that is, that many, at least, of the Pedobaptists are godly, both of Men and Women. *They are Sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints, and such as call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord:* and these, and such like Characters are Churches described by in the Epistles, which

which the Apostles wrote to them.

1. I reason thus then: If Pedobaptists are godly Men, such as believe in Christ, then they are Members of Christ: and if they are Members of Christ, they are of his Body, the Church: and if they be of the Church, then they have right to Communion with the Church, and they that deny it them, deny them their right: Because Union with the whole, creates a right to Communion with the parts in all Bodies, Natural, Political, or Mystical. The Ministration of Gospel-Ordinances, which is given by Christ for the Edification of the whole Body, belongs to every part, *Ephes. 4. 12. 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22, 23.*

If it be said, though such Pedobaptists have a remote right, yet without Baptism after Faith they cannot have an immediate right to Church-Communion: I answer, that Baptism after Faith, can be no more necessary to Church-Communion, then it is unto Salvation. For the means cannot be more necessary to the subordinate end which is Church-Communion, then it is to the principal, which is Salvation. And Baptism is necessary to Salvation but by way of duty where opportunity occurs, but not by doing

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way of means where opportunity of doing ones duty is wanting. And if to be Baptized after Faith, were indeed the Pedobaptists duty, the true reason why they do not perform it, is the want of a Moral opportunity, that is, the want of conviction that it is their duty, they verily believing they were sufficiently Baptized in their Infancy, and that it is not Lawful for them to be re-baptized. And all the while they remain under this perswasion, they can no more lawfully receive an after-baptizing by a voluntary submission to it, then they can who desire to be Baptized, but want the opportunity of that health, or such an administrator, as is necessary thereto. And if their right to Salvation under these Circumstances, be not cut off, as doubtless, it is not for the reason before given, then no more can their right to Church-Communion be thereby cut off for the same reason. I think I may very safely say, that there is no error in judgment about Baptism, nor about any other thing, which yet is consistent with saving Faith and Love, and not pertinaciously persisted in after conviction, for which a Man can duly be deprived of Church-Communion, that doth not by his voluntary

tary separation deprive himself of it : which persisting in error after conviction is not the case of the honest-minded Pedobaptists, though they should be supposed to be in error. Persons erring upon no worse terms, are, doubtless, the objects of Christian forbearance in the Church, and not of such severity as to exclude them from Communion. This you may take as a further account why I said Baptism after Faith can be no more necessary to Church-Communion, then it is unto Salvation.

2. If very many of the Pedobaptists are such godly Persons, and true believers in Christ, as are afore described, then it cannot be denied but they are such whom the Lord hath received into Communion with himself: and if so, then those who are likewise his People, ought to receive them into their Communion too; *Rom. 14. 1 -- 3. Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, for God hath received him; Rom. 15. 7. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ received us.* If it be said, these Scriptures concern such as were duly Baptized: I answer, That the reason why they should receive one another, is not fetcht from their having been Baptized, but from the Lord's receiving them. And

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no supposed error in Persons about Baptism, can be a reason why they should not be received to Communion; farther then it is a reason to prove that the Lord hath not received them. St. *Peter* thought it a good reason why the Christians should make no difference between believing Jews and believing Gentiles, though they were of different persuasions about the necessity, and non-necessity of Circumcision (wherein the one erred) because the Lord made no difference, but gave to one the Holy Ghost as well as to the other, and purified the hearts of the one by Faith as well as the other, *Acts* 15. 8, 9. His reason is not fetcht from the Nature of the things wherein they differed, but from God's giving them an equal interest in his grace notwithstanding their difference. When God had vouchsafed the gift of his grace and Spirit to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, St. *Peter* thought that if after this he should have kept the same distance from them as before he thought he was bound to do, he should have withstood God in so doing, *Act.* II. 17. *For as much then as God gave them the like gift, as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that*

I could withstand God? To keep at a distance from those to whom God draws nigh in the Communication of his grace and Spirit, is, it seems, to steer a course against God, or to withstand him.

3. The Anabaptists and Pedobaptists, if Godly, do by Faith hold Communion one with another in eating the same Spiritual meat, and drinking the same Spiritual drink; the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, which is the thing signified in the Lord's Supper: *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no Life in you*; Joh. 6. 53. And therefore they cannot duly deny Communion with them in the Lord's Supper it self, which is the sign.

1. Because if they do, they thereby cross one great end and design of God in that Ordinance; which is to increase and strengthen Love and Unity among Christians in communicating together in the sign, upon account of their joynt-interest in, and Relation to Christ, the Substance. Christians by their Communion in that Ordinance, are made *to drink into one Spirit*, or, into one-ness of Spirit, 1 Cor. 12. 13. But by their thus refusing to Communicate one with another, they do not only sin in not using

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the Lord's appointed means to increase and strengthen Love and Unity upon account of common interest in the same Saviour, but also in that by such their refusal, they destroy Unity, and weaken & diminish Love: they pull down instead of building up, steer a contrary course to Christ in appointing that Ordinance.

2. Men's right to the sign, proceeds upon the best account from their right to the thing signified, though not from that only. As those who have right to such or such an Estate in Land, have thereby a right to the deeds and evidences by which such a right is to be declared: So those that have a right to the Body and Blood of Christ through Faith, have thereby a right to the Lord's Supper, as an evidence appointed by God; by which such their right is to be declared and acknowledged. And therefore as a detaining of such evidence from him who by having right to the Land, hath right to the evidence, would be an injury: even so for any as much as in them lies to detain the Lord's Supper from them who by having right to the Body and Blood of Christ, have right to the Lord's Supper as an evidence and sign thereof, would be an injury likewise, and that so much greater

greater too, as Spiritual things are of more value then temporal.

3. It is absurd, and against common reason for them to grant that the Godly Pedobaptists have Communion with them in the greater and better part, and yet for a supposed error consistent with saving Faith & Love, to deny it them in the less, whenas the greater alwayes includes the less. But for the Godly Pedobaptists to be partakers of like precious Faith with them, and thereby to eat of that Flesh which is meat indeed, and to drink of that Blood which is drink indeed, together with themselves (a thing which the Anabaptists will not deny) is certainly to have, hold, and enjoy Communion with them in the greater, better, more Spiritual, and more substantial part of Communion; and therefore to deny it them in the out-side and letter of it, which is far less considerable, is very incongruous and contradictory.

What was objected by distinguishing between an immediate and remote right, if it should be here brought in again, hath been answered before, and the answer need not be repeated, but only applied here. And let it be remembred alwayes, that there is a vast difference between

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those who deny, and those that hold the necessity and usefulness of water Baptism in these latter Ages of the Church. The Pedobaptists are as much for water-Baptism, as the Anabaptists are, and hold themselves as firmly engaged by their Infant-Baptism, as they do by their after-Baptism. If this were not so, their case would not be so pleadable as now it is.

And for any to separate from them upon account of their being Baptized in their Infancy, as it is without ground from Scripture, I conceive, so it is without all president in the Church of Christ for the first fifteen hundred years and more. Though some in the ancient Church were Baptized in Infancy, and some at Age, yet there was never any breaking of Communion among them upon that score so far as ever I could learn, untill a Reformation of a Reformation was set on foot; the one to puzzle and confound the other: I mean, the attempt of the Anabaptists in *Germany* to Reform the Reformation by *Luther* and others. Which may be a motive to reflect upon what they have done, and to review their grounds. Can they think to out-do the Church in her purest times in point of Communion?

Me-thinks

Me-thinks they should greatly suspect themselves in their undertaking wherein they go so manifestly contrary to the Universal Church in all places and Ages till so lately, as afore-said.

II. Dividing Principle to be avoided.

That it is unlawful to hold Communion with parochial Congregations, notwithstanding they have been Baptized into the Profession of the true Faith, and continue in that profession. This is another grand dividing Principle indeed. They who hold this, and practice accordingly, must prove such Communion unlawful, or else lye under the guilt of a sinful Schism, or causeless separation, and of all the evil and mischievous effects and consequences of it. And to prove it unlawful, they must prove it is so, either by proving, 1. That all the Members of each Parochial Assembly from which they separate, are destitute of saving grace; or, 2. By proving that the mixture of bad with good, makes Communion unlawful; or, 3. By proving the constitution of such Congregations bad, upon account of that distribution by which the whole Nation is divided into

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its parts and precincts; or, 4. By proving the worship in those Assemblies, to be such as may not lawfully be joyned in. These contain either all, or the principal pretended causes of a stated separation from them. For the plea upon account of the insufficiency of some Ministers, is a thing but of an accidental Nature, and no Universal pretence of separation. And whether they are like to prove all, or indeed any of these, you may please to consider what follows, and then judge.

1. They cannot prove all the members of each parochial Assembly from which they separate, to be destitute of saving grace, much less to be so scandalous as to deserve Excommunication. For,

First, there is so little a difference between common grace, and the lowest degree of special and saving grace, as makes it impossible for one Christian to know another to be destitute of saving grace, the tenor of whose Life is not worse then theirs, who are the most inoffensive and best disposed in the Parishes. And if they cannot make proof that they are all destitute of saving grace; then,

2. Its utterly against the rules of Charity, indeed of all Christianity, to
judge

judge such to be destitute of saving grace, of which they cannot make certain proof. For *Charity thinketh no evil, but believeth all things, and hopeth all things.* And for one Man to judge another to have no grace, or to be in a damnable condition who is not manifestly guilty of living in such sins as for which the Scripture expressly excludes Men out of the Kingdome of Heaven, is a thing which the Scripture expressly condemns as a great sin. Mat. 7. 1. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.* Jam. 4. 12. *Who art thou that judgest another?* And again, *Who art thou that judgest another mans Servant?* Rom. 14. 4. And can they prove indeed (or will they undertake it) that all the Inhabitants of this or that Parish without exception, are guilty of such sins, as for which the Scripture doth expressly bar Men out of the Kingdome of Heaven. And if not, dare they judge them all to be in a reprobate or damnable condition? And if they dare not, or cannot judge so without manifest breach of Charity, then to be sure they cannot prove that they are so: And if they cannot prove it, what a horrid thing is it, or would it be to judge whole Parishes by the lump to be such?

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3. I querie how they will prove it is of absolute necessity unto Lawful Communion with a Congregation that have been Baptized into one Body the Church, that at least some of them should be savingly holy? As Suppose the Church of *Laodicea* for instance had consisted all of such as had only a form of Godliness; will they say, and prove it when they have done, that Communion with them had been unlawful? I suppose they will not, and am confident they cannot.

2. They cannot prove that a mixture of the bad with the good makes Communion with such mixt Assemblies unlawful. They can neither prove it by Scripture prohibition, nor by Scripture Example.

1. Let them shew where the Scripture forbids it. If they say there, where it saith, *If any Man that is called a Brother be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such an one no, not to eat*; 1 Cor. 5. 11. And where again it saith, *Withdraw your selves from every Brother that walks disorderly, and the like.* The Answer is ready, which is this; That these, and all other Scriptures of like Nature, are to be considered, either first, as injunctions upon
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the Church as invested with the power of discipline; or, secondly, as commands to particular Persons a part. So far as they belong to the Church in a publick capacity, and as invested with the power of discipline, they impose the duty of using the power of the Keyes for the Reforming and Cure of the scandalous, and for preventing contagion in the Church. But so far as they respect Persons in a single and private capacity, they prohibit personal familiarity and converse thereby to discountenance their evil, and to work them to a sense of it, and to caution others against it; and to secure themselves from the infection of it. But then there is a vast difference between abstaining from a personal familiarity and converse with such, and a withdrawing from the Church for the sake of such: this is a sin, but the other a duty.

And whereas some have alledged the 2 Cor. 6. 17. *Come out from among them, &c.* This was no call to the better sort of Christians to separate from the worser, and such as were scandalous in the Church of *Corinth*, but a call to those that had in part embraced the Gospel, to come quite off from Heathenish Idols, and from participating in the Sacrifices
which

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which were offered to them: which is meant by *touch not the unclean thing*, there. This appears by the Context from ver. 14. and by comparing here with, 1 Cor. 8. 7. 10. and 10. 7. 14. 21. 22.

Others alledge, *Revel.* 18. 4. Come out of her my People, &c. If this be meant of Mystical *Babylon*, as they understand it; It is not a call to separate from those that Worship the true God only, and in the Mediation of Christ Jesus only, as the Parish Churches Protestant do; But from her who is stiled a Harlot, because she gives that Honour which is due only to God, and to our only Mediator Christ Jesus, to Creatures and to other Mediators together with God and with Christ. When it can be proved our Parish Churches do so, then, and not till then, will this Text be pertinently alledged to justify separation from them.

2. Let them shew, if they can, some approved Example in Scripture of such a practice. That there have been great scandals in the Churches, both in that recorded in the Old Testament, and those recorded in the New, is manifest, as is shewed particularly and at large by Mr. *Baxter* in his fifth *Direct.* for Cure of Church.

Church-divisions. But where do we find any of the better sort in those Churches, withdrawing themselves from the more carnal part, into separate Bodies, for Reformation sake? We read indeed of some that *went out from the Church, because they were not of them*; and of some that *did separate themselves being sensual, not having the Spirit*; but not a word of the good separating from the Church because of the bad in it. In the Church of *Sardis* which *had a Name to live, but was dead*, there were but *a few Names*, but what had *defiled their Garments*. And those few indeed are commanded, and encouraged by promise of great reward for that they had kept their Garments undefiled amidst such a Society, but not in the least encouraged to separate from them, though all the rest were defiled.

They plead indeed, that particular Churches ought to consist of none but of visible Saints, because this is agreeable to the primitive pattern: the appellations or Titles which are given the Churches in the Epistles the Apostles wrote to them, declare them to have been such when they *say to the Saints in such and such a place*. This is not denied, but the Question is upon what account they were esteemed visible

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visible Saints, and were so styled? As whether it were, 1. Because there were such special positive signs of saving grace besides their common profession of Christianity visible in all the Members of those Churches, as that there was just cause they should be stiled Saints upon that account? Or, 2. Whether the whole were not denominated from the better part? Or, 3. Whether it was not because they were all Saints by an outward Calling and Profession.

1. It is no wayes probable they had all such positive signs of saving Sanctity upon them, as that they were all stiled Saints upon that account. Sure it was not for this cause that St. Paul stiled those of the Church at Corinth Saints, 1 Cor. 1. 2. 2 Cor. 1. 1. When at the same time he saith there was *such Fornication among them as was not so much as named among the Heathen*. Chap. 5. 1. that there were some of them, *that with Conscience of the Idol did eat of the Sacrifice offered to it*, Chap. 8. 7. that at the Lord's Supper *some were hungry, and some drunk*, for which with other profanations of it, many of them had been visited with sickness and Death, Chap. 11. that *some among them had not the knowledge of God*, and

and did deny the Resurrection, Chap. 15. that he feared that when he should come among them, he should not find them such as he would, but that he should find debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, back bitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults among them, and some that had not repented of the uncleanness, and Fornication, and lasciviousness which they had committed; 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21. These things according to St. Paul's account, in Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. were rather signs of such as shall not inherit the Kingdome of God then of saving grace. I doubt those who plead the primitive patern for admitting none into their separate Churches but who are under positive signs of saving grace, would be unwilling to receive such for visible Saints as here we have found among those to whom St. Paul writes as to Saints. But if Persons under such Characters as aforesaid, passed with St. Paul for visible Saints upon one account or other, how comes it to pass that those of our Parishes that make the same profession as the Church of *Corinth* did, will not pass for visible Saints too upon the same account, be it what it will? Is it because they are under worse Characters then those already mentioned? I trow
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not, but rather because they are partial that stick at it.

2. If they will say they were all denominated Saints from the better part among them in the Church of *Corinth* and other Churches, then why may not our parochial Congregations be so too? Unless they will say there is none good among them, and prove what they say, which to be sure they can never do, if they had hearts to attempt it. But this cannot be the reason why they are called Saints, because these two phrases, *the Church of God which is at Corinth*, and *the Sanctified in Christ Jesus*, are of equal latitude and extent, and both refer to all the same persons, as appears by the words themselves, which are these. *Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints*: the latter words being exegetical of the former, *1 Cor. I. 2.*

3. If they were styled Saints upon account of their external Calling by which they were separated from the Pagan and Infidel World and Worship, unto a professed belief in, and obedience to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, into which they had been Baptized, then our parochial Congregations consist of
visible

visible Saints too as well as those: For they have been Baptized into the same Faith, and continue to profess it: And by that profession are separated from the Infidel and Pagan World. So that let our Opponents in this point take it in which sense they will, yet they will never be able to prove but that our Parochical Congregations are visible Saints upon the same account, and in the same sense, in which those of the Church of *Corinth* were stiled Saints.

And it is most probable that the primitive Churches were stiled Saints upon this last mentioned account of an outward calling and profession of Christianity. Saints with them signified but the same thing as Christians now doth with us, and was the common appellation by which the professors of Christianity were distinguished from others then, as Christian is now. Where they were once called Christians then, they were twenty times called Saints, if we may estimate their usage by what is recorded. For we have the appellation Saints above threescore times in the New Testament, and that of Christian but thrice, as I take it. They were called Saints, as it is, *Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 2.* For the two words [to be]

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are added by the Translators in both places. You will never find I suppose the appellation, Saints, applyed to the sincere in opposition to the unsincere of the Church, as by Custome now they are, but alwayes in opposition to those that were not at all of the Church, or which made no profession of Christianity at all. It was, I take it, in this sense; & by virtue of an outward Calling and Profession, that those were said to be *Sanctified by the blood of the Covenant*, who yet by Apostacy trod under foot the Son of God, and counted *that Blood an unholy thing*; Heb. 10. 29. All that were outwardly called so far as to profess Christianity, were called to be Saints, Saints by Calling. Our Saviour hath told us over and over, that many are called, and but few are chosen: its well if there be not abundantly more nominal then real Saints. The whole Body of the People of the Jews by virtue of an external Calling to Worship the true God, and to receive and observe his Law, were called *Saints*, and a *Holy People unto the Lord*, Deut. 33. 2, 3. and 7. 6. And a Congregation of such are called a *Congregation of Saints*, and Assemblies of such, *Assemblies of Saints*, Psal. 89. 5. 7. and 149. 1. And yet we know what sorry Saints

Saints many of them appeared to be. And St. *Paul* seems to reckon the Church of *Corinth* and other Churches to consist of somewhat alike mixture as that of the Jews of old did, when he told them that they were Types of us upon whom the ends of the World are come, and admonished them by God's fore displeasure expressed against most of them: And would by no means have them ignorant or unmindful of one thing, and that was, that those with whom God was not well pleased, but overthrew them in the Wilderness, were of God's Church, and enjoyed special priviledges, as well as they themselves: which priviledges he expresseth in terms more appropriate to their present Christian state, when he saith, they were all Baptized unto *Moses*, and did all eat the same Spiritual meat, and drank the same Spiritual drink. By whose example he would have them take warning, and not be flattered into a good opinion of themselves meerly upon account of their Baptism and holding Communion with the Church in Holy Administrations, and being numbred among the Saints or Christians; 1 *Cor.* 10. And truly they seem to be much more in danger of being betrayed into

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such a self-flattery, who are not admitted to Church-fellowship upon their Christian profession, unless besides that they can give such a satisfactory account to the Church of their conversion after they have been first received into the Church Catholique by Baptism, in which there may be great mistake in them that so receive them. And therefore the *New-England* Ministers in their Answer to Mr. *Davenport's* Apologetical Preface, p. 43, 44. say thus: *Indeed when Men confound these two, and do tye visible Church-Membership unto such Conditions and qualifications, as are reputed enough to Salvation: this may tend to harden Men, and to make them conceit, that if once they be got into the Church, they are sure of Heaven; whereas alas. it may be they are far from it.*

But in all this there is nothing against the great usefulness and desirableness of Discipline in the Church, for the Cure or Excommunication of the notoriously scandalous. But yet a neglect of this in them to whom it belongs, is no sufficient ground of separation from that Church where it is so neglected. For though Discipline be necessary for the better being of the Church, yet it is not of the Essence of the Church: it doth not cease

to be a true Church for want of it. And the neglect of it in a Church is so far from being a reason why the better part in such a Church should separate from the worse, as that it is indeed a reason against it why they should not: Because where publick Discipline is wanting, there is the more need of private application to delinquent Members, which separation takes Men off from, or at best puts them under a great disadvantage of doing that good among them thereby, which otherwise they might. Such a separation rather puts those separated from, under a temptation of Making a party against them, as is frequently seen: and the division made and heightened thus on both sides, tends more to weaken the Christian Interest in the main, then all the exercise of Discipline in separate Congregations, tends to promote it. Its true, if Christians were to mind only the pleasing of themselves, it would be a pleasant thing for the good indeed to converse and hold Communion with such only as themselves. But it will turn to a better account at last, if by denying their inclination in this they help and bring on a worse sort, and gain *their Master ten Talent*. There should be *more abundant honour given to that part*
G 3 *which*

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which lacketh, that there may be no Schism in the Body, 1 Cor. 12. 24. Our Saviour himself was chiefly for the bringing home of straying *Sheep*, and as a Physician to be among the sick rather than the whole: Not because he loved them better; but because they had more need, and because he could thereby be more serviceable as to the main end of his coming into the World. *He came not to call the Righteous, but sinners to Repentance: to minister. and not to be ministered to.* And to be this way employed, seems to be more acceptable to God, then to have to do only with the Righteous: *There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more then over ninety and nine just Persons which need no Repentance.* And thus much I think may suffice to shew how unlikely, yea, how impossible it is to prove that the mixture of the bad with the good in the Parishes, makes Communion with them unlawful.

3. They cannot prove the constitution of parochial Congregations to be bad upon account of that distribution by which the whole Nation is divided into parts, into so many Parishes, which they are wont to call humane institution. For, first, they are of the same institution in the

the main, as those were which were planted by the Apostles themselves. For from what were those called Churches, but from the Christians usual Assembling together for Communion in Gospel-Ordinances? The Greek word Translated *Church* properly signifying an *Assembly*. And if the Parishioners in a Parish, do usually Assemble together upon the same account, are not those Gospel-Churches as well as the other? and of the same institution?

Secondly, for the Christians that live within the same Precincts or Parish-bounds to Assemble together for Communion in Gospel-Ordinances, and so to be of the same particular Church, and not of another, is a thing which best answers the ends of particular Church-ship, and the primitive patern. For vicinity of Neighbour-hood and cohabitation, (which generally are not to be had so well in any other way as in that of parochial distribution) do best accommodate those in Church-Relation, with the knowledge of each others Condition and Conversation, and with opportunity and advantage to watch over, confer with, and to admonish, exhort and comfort one another, and to Assemble together for publick

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Worship; which are the ends of particular Church-association. And accordingly the primitive Christians which lived together within the same civil bounds of Cities and Towns, as of *Corinth*, *Cenchrea*, &c. were constantly of the same Church, and as such were still denominated by the places where they did reside. And if some such distribution of the Christians in a Nation into severall particular Worshipping Congregations as is now made by humane Authority, is necessary of it self in reference to the Church-Association, though no humane Authority had required it, then certainly the command of humane Authority that it should be so, cannot make it unnecessary, much less unlawful.

4. They cannot prove the Worship now used in our parochial Assemblies, to be such as may not lawfully be joyned in. The Lawfulness of Communion in the Worship of the *English* Lyturgy, is the thing in question. And if they cannot prove Communion in it unlawful, neither, 1. Because it is a set Form; nor, 2. Because it is such a set Form as it is; nor, 3. Because it is imposed; then I shall take it for granted they cannot prove it unlawful any other way. And whether
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ever they are like to prove Communion in that Worship unlawful upon any of those accounts, consider what I have to offer, and then judge.

1. They cannot prove Communion in that Worship unlawful upon account of its being a set Form; because they cannot prove all set Forms of Worship forbidden. We have Prayer several times commanded in Scripture, but no where determined that it shall be extemporary that ever I could learn. And therefore if the want of an express precept for praying in a set Form made praying in a set Form unlawful, the same thing would make extemporary prayer unlawful too. When God hath in Scripture plainly determined to whom we shall pray, and in whose Name, and for what, and in what manner, but not in what external mode, as whether in a set Form or without; either of them may be Lawful. For the reason, doubtless, why God hath not restrained Prayer either to the one mode or the other, is, that either may be made use of as occasion serves, or circumstances require. For if he had not intended to have left Men at more Liberty in this then he hath in the object, matter, and manner of prayer, he would have been as par-

particular in determining in what mode he would be sought to, as in what Name, and for what. It is in this duty of Prayer in reference to the mode, much as it is in the duty of singing of Psalms: the duty of singing them is expressly enjoined in the New Testament as well as the Old, but what Psalms in particular, and whether such as are indited by them that sing, or by some others for them, or whether in Prose or in Meeter, or whether by all the Congregation joyntly, or by a part only, are circumstances not determined particularly in the New Testament. And why are they not? But that there might be a Liberty left to vary in these particulars as circumstances should render it most convenient. Some indeed have made such ill use of this, as that because the Scripture hath not determined all these particulars, they will not make use of any, and so wholly neglect the duty it self, to the dishonour of him who hath made it a duty: as if he had been defective in not determining those circumstances, when as Men were purposely left at Liberty herein for their greater edification. And doubtless for the same reason is the external mode of Prayer left so much undetermined as it is.

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By these things we may see how impertinently some use to object against the Lyrurgical mode of Worship, the sin of *Nadab* and *Abihu* in offering strange fire before the Lord, and of *Jeroboam's* keeping the Passeeover on the fifteenth day of the eighth Moneth, and the like. For if the offering of Incense had been commanded, but with what fire not determined, it would not have been their sin to have offered with any fire that had been conveniently useful for that purpose. And so if the keeping of the Passeeover had been commanded, and neither time nor place determined, it would have been no sin to have kept it on the fifteenth day of the eighth Moneth, and in *Bethel*, provided it had been to the Lord only. So we say when Prayer is commanded, but the mode not determined, any are lawful as Circumstances shall render them convenient. God had appointed with what fire Incense should be offered as well as that Incense it self should be offered, viz. with fire from off the Altar: And so he had in what Moneth, and on what day of the Moneth the Passeeover should be kept, as well as that it should be kept at all: and in varying from these was the sin of those Men. If God had limited Prayer

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Prayer by his command to that mode which we call extemporary praying, then these instances would have been pertinently alledged against the Lyturgy, but this is not the case; and therefore they, and all other of like Nature are impertinently alledged against modes of Worship not determined in Scripture either one way or other. And such is the allegation of those Scriptures also in this case, which are against adding to the Word, *Deut.* 12. 32. against Sacrificing to Idol-gods, which God saith he commanded not, *Jer.* 7. 31. and 19. 5. *Deut.* 17. 3. against making false representations of God by Images, as in the second Commandment, which because they do so, are therefore called a lye: all which refer to false Worship in the substance of it, as being contrary to God's expresse Command, and not unto such circumstances relating to the substance of Commanded Worship, which are neither Commanded nor forbidden, but left to the prudence of God's People to order themselves in by general Rules: for which cause the allegation of them in this business, is wholly impertinent and irrelative to the question. And yet this way of misapplying Scripture, hath been, I think
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I may say, the only way of upholding unlawful separations in the Church.

But the plain truth is, if that would satisfy Men, that the Scripture is so far from forbidding the use of a set Form in Prayer in any case, as that there is much in the Scripture to countenance it. God Commanded a Form to be used by the Priests in Blessing the People, *Numb. 6.*

23. — *Hezekiah the King, and the Princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David and Asaph the Seer, 2 Chron. 29. 30.* What are many of the Psalms but so many set Forms of Prayer and Thanksgiving? The Title of the 102 Psalm, is *A Prayer for the afflicted when he is over-whelmed and pourth out his complaint before the Lord.*

The 72 Psalm concludes thus, *The prayers of David, the Son of Jesse, are ended.* The Title of the 90 Psalm is a Prayer of *Moses the man of God.* Our Saviour taught his Disciples a Forme of Prayer, as *John the Baptist* had before taught his; and commanded them saying, *when ye pray, say our Father. &c.* And is it not strange then that any of his Disciples should say when ye pray, say not our Father, &c.

Again, do not they who sing Psalms pray

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pray to God, and praise God in a set Form? Nay, is not the Prayer of every Minister a Form to all the People that joyn with him, how extemporary soever it may be to him himself? For they are as much confined in this case, as if he read it out of a Book: and every time he varies, it is still but a new Form to the People. So that they that are most against Forms, are necessitated to use some themselves. And so I have done with shewing my reason why the Prayers of the *Lyturgie* cannot be proved unlawful in respect of its being a set Form.

2. They cannot prove it unlawful to joyn in the Prayers made according to the *Lyturgie* upon account of its being such a set Form as it is; Neither, 1. In respect of the object to whom, nor of the Mediator by whom the Prayer is made. Nor, 2. In respect of the matter of it of which it doth consist. Nor, 3. In respect of the words and phrase significant of the matter. Nor, 4. In respect of the method, the repetitions, the abruptions, the responses, or popular conclamations thereby used, nor because read out of a Book. Nor, 5. Though they should be able to prove the fore-mentioned repetitions, abruptions, responses, and

and exclamations, or the like, to be real defects in that mode of Worship, and that a better is desirable, and that another might be more useful.

1. They cannot prove Communion in those Prayers unlawful in respect of him to whom they are made, nor in respect of him in whose Name they are made. For they are made to the true God only, and only in the Name and Mediation of the only Mediatour Christ Jesus.

2. Nor secondly, in respect of the matter of which they do consist. I know no Prayer in the *Lyturgie* appointed for the ordinary publick Worship, but what refers either to confession of sin, or petition for pardon, or for the assistance of God's grace and Holy Spirit, or for some temporal, or other spiritual, or eternal Blessings, or for the averting of the contrary evils, or to thanksgiving to God for benefits relating to this Life, or that which is to come; and all this in the behalf of our selves and others. And if there be nothing but what is of this Nature, the matter of the Prayers to be sure, cannot be proved to be unlawful.

3. They cannot prove Communion in those Prayers unlawful upon account of the

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the words and phrase by which the substantial matter of the Worship is expressed. They are not made in an unknown tongue or Language not understood by the people. Nor will they ever be able to prove but that in respect of the words and phrase, that mode of Prayer is of the common Nature of any right mode of Prayer whatsoever. The best mode of publick Prayer is but a *medium* of conveying the substantial matter of Prayer to the understanding and affection of them that pray, and from thence to God. It is necessary indeed in this respect that the words and phrase should be significant and expressive of the import of the matter and substance of which the Prayer doth consist. As when God is to be magnified for the glory of his perfections and marvellous doings : and when we would be humbled for the pravity and degenerateness of our Nature and miscarriages towards him ; and when in the sense thereof, and of God's declared goodness through Christ, we would beg forgiveness of sin and the assistance of his grace for amendment, and eternal Life in the issue, or any temporal Blessing ; it is necessary that these things be expressed in words and phrases that have some aptness in them

them to fill the Soul with apprehensions and affections suitable to the respective matter of the parts of Prayer to which they do relate. The general Nature of all right modes of Prayer consists in this, whether with, or without the use of a Book, whether uttered in a set Form of words, or from the present invention and conception of the mind. And it cannot with any colour of reason or truth be denied, but that the Lyrurgical mode of Prayer is of this Nature. The words and phrase are intelligibly significant of the matter and substance of Prayer to which they relate; and so serve for publick edification, according to the Rule, *1 Cor. 14. 9. 14, 15.*

And if so, then we may, if the fault be not in our selves, and if a heart be not wanting, seriously and devoutly present our necessary Confessions, Petitions, and Thanksgivings unto God in that mode. It is too gross an apprehension of God to think that a greater variety of words and phrases as such, do delight him: but it is Humilite, Reverence, sense of wants, fervent desires of supply, and faith of acceptance through Christ concurring with words significant of such things, whether pronounced out of a Book, or otherwise,

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that he is pleased with. Nor is it comely for us to think that it is the repetition of the same words every day, as in the Lord's Prayer, that doth displease the Lord: but it is the irreverent, rash, careless, and customary pouring out words before him without any due sense of what they import, that doth offend him. If Men be but attentive and careful to engage their hearts to go along with the matter signified by the words, and to be duly affected with the import thereof; it is not their being read out of a Book that will make these Prayers unacceptable or ineffectual: As on the other hand, if Men are careless and unconscionable therein, it is not its proceeding from a gift of him that utters the Prayer that will make it acceptable and effectual, how excellent soever the matter and words may be. I conclude then that the mode of Prayer in our *English* Lyturgie, doth in the general Nature and quality of it, agree with all right modes of publick Prayer whatsoever, and with the general Rule by which all right modes of Prayer are to be squared. The question is not whether it be the best, but whether it is so competently useful, as to render Communion in Prayer by it lawful.

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4. They cannot prove Communion in the Prayers of the Lyturgie unlawful in respect of the method, repetitions, abruptions, responses, or conclamations thereby used. For so long as the Scriptures in which the duty of Prayer is enjoined, have not determined whether it shall be with the help of a Book, or without: or whether longer or shorter: or whether all the publick Prayer meet for the Assembly shall be put up to God in two or three Prayers, or more: or whether all shall be pronounced by the Minister only, or part by the People also: or whether kneeling or standing; I cannot see how it will be proved unlawful to do it any of these wayes, as circumstances in the case may be. For the question before us is not at all which is most convenient where Men are at Liberty to chuse, but only what is Lawful, or which is to be chosen under a necessity of either using such a mode, or of separating. It is not unlawful for all the People in a Congregation to pray to God, or praise him together with one voyce, in singing of Psalms: and how then it will be proved unlawful for them to do it in another way of praying, I know not. We read of many that by their conjunction of

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voyces,

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voyses, were as one to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, 2 Chron. 5. 13. They may, perhaps, think such repetitions of the same Prayer as are used by the Lyturgie may be forbidden by our Saviour, when he said, when ye Pray use not vain repetitions as the Heathen do, *Mat. 6.* But they will hardly prove it, if they do but consider what the vain repetitions which the Heathen used, were. For there seems to be no likeness or proportion between the repetitions in the Lyturgie and those of the Heathen. For they repeated the very same words it may be a hundred times over and more in a little time: as they, in 1 Kings 18. 26. who from Morning untill Noon, cryed, O Baal, hear us; O

* If accompanied with suitable affection without expectation of acceptance merely for much speaking, which makes repetition vain.

Baal, hear us. The very same words are used twenty six times in *Psal. 136.* and often in many other Psalms, and yet I dare not say they are a vain repetition, and I suppose, nor they neither. * It is said of our Saviour, that again he went away and prayed, and spake the same words, Mark 14. 39.

5. Although they should be able certainly, and without all doubt to prove the fore-mentioned repetitions, abruptions, responses, and conclamations, or the

the like, to be real defects in that mode of Worship, and that a better *medium* is desirable, and that another might be more useful; yet it will not from thence follow, that that would be a sufficient ground or cause of separation from the substance of the Worship it self, for these two reasons.

1. Because those who count the use of these a disorderly way of praying, need not be active in those things unless they will, but only passive. And if they be but passive, they will not by their presence be guilty of the disorder. I suppose they do not think their presence at conceived prayers by habit, makes them guilty of all the disorders and defects that are found in them, or some of them, so long as they do not in their minds consent to those disorders and defects, but are sorry for them. For they are in such cases but involuntary defect as to them; and defects of that Nature our best performances are more or less lyable to. We may lay aside all duties at this rate, if we think we may not endeavour a performance of them till we can do them without all involuntary defects. But that in which a mans will is not, is not morally the mans act: *Every Man is tempted when he*

is drawn away of his own lust, and emiced.

Jam. 1. And no Man is to be counted a consenter to all that is done in his presence, though he do not declare his dissent, unless he declare his consent to it some other way then meerly by his presence. If this were not so, a Man would be guilty of all the defects he perceives in the Ministers Praying and Preaching, unless he declared his dissent from them in the open Congregation, which if practised, would tend to open confusion. When we consider the corrupt Estate of the Jewish Church in which our Saviour held Communion both in Temple-Worship, and Synagogue-Worship at *Nazareth*, where he was brought up; I suppose no Man will think that the Administration of the Worship there, was free from all defects, especially considering that their Lyturgie was of humane composition, and yet our Saviour's presence at this Worship, and joyning in it, did not make him guilty of the defects that cleaved to it. The Scribes and Pharisees taught unsound Doctrine as well as sound; and yet our Saviour encouraged his Disciples to hear them, only cautioning them to beware of the leaven of their Doctrine, lest they should receive it, or approve

approve of it: Which had been a contradiction, if their presence in reference to the good, had been an approbation of the bad. Nor did the private Members of the Church of *Corinth* by their presence at the disorderly Administration of Holy things, complained of by the Apostle, in the 11. and 14. Chap. make themselves guilty of that disorder, without somewhat else besides their presence. That's my first Reason.

2. The repetitions, abruptions, responses, and the reading the Prayers out of a Book, are not opposite to, or destructive of the matter and ends of Prayer: all that can be pretended, is, that they are less useful, less conducing to the ends of Worship. The things asked in that way are desirable in themselves; the supposed defect lies in the supposed disorderly way of asking them. For otherwise the petitioning for things in this way, tends to the same end as when the same things are prayed for in a supposed more orderly way, though comparatively with some disadvantage. A greater degree of usefulness doth not exclude a less, but only exceed it. A mode or *medium* of Prayer is not therefore useless because another is more useful, especially when a

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more useful one cannot be made use of and the other declined without a greater inconvenience otherwise. They will not say its unlawful to joyn in conceived Prayer with a Minister or private Christian that is less able then another, and, perhaps, far inferiour to some then present. A less useful version of the Psalms doth not make it unlawful to sing Psalms by such a version. The gesture of kneeling in Prayer is the best and meetest, and yet that doth not make the use of another gesture in Prayer unlawful. If the Common-Prayer-Book, *medium* of Worship then be in the fore-mentioned respects, or any other, less useful then another, it might be indeed a reason inducing them that think so, to make use of another which they judge better, if they were at Liberty to do it without drawing on a greater inconvenience, such as separation is with all its ill effects. But otherwise can any Man think that the less usefulness of a mode but of part of the publick Worship (for it is no more) to be a sufficient ground of separation, when there is a necessity of using the one, or practising the other. Under such Circumstances doubtless a less useful mode of publick Worship is much more eligible then to run all the hazards, and to bring
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on all the evil effects of a separation for the use of one but comparatively better. It is most certain that separation upon account of a less useful mode tends more to the hurt and damage of the Religious interest in the main, then the use of a less useful mode of but part of the publick Worship can with any colour of reason or truth be pretended to do. All that can be pretended, is, that it tends less to the good of Religion, but not at all to its hurt, as separation doth.

3. And lastly, as to this: They cannot prove Communion in the Worship prescribed by the Lyturgie to be unlawful upon account of its being imposed by Man, and commanded by humane Authority. Before they can prove this, they must prove such Communion to be forbidden of God (which, as I have been shewing before, cannot be done.) For that Law of God which will bear us out in doing a thing, cannot be repealed by the Law of Man commanding the same thing. There is no such enmity or inconsistency between God's Laws and those of Men which are but subordinate, or not opposite to God's, as that any thing should become the less acceptable to God, meerly because commanded by his

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his Minister. Nay, we obey God in obeying the higher powers in such things as are not contrary to his Laws; because God hath commanded us to obey them in such things. It is not a setting up of Man in God's stead till Man is obeyed against God, not when he is obeyed in subordination to him.

But let us turn the Tables a little, and suppose that the Law of the Land did forbid the use of any set Form of Prayer in the Church, (as sometime the use of the Lyturgie was forbidden) and that all Ministers were by Law commanded to pray extempory, would such an imposition or command make extemporary Prayer unlawful, and only a Form of Prayer then necessary? I suppose they will not say it would; and if not, then for the same reason why it would not make Prayer in that mode unlawful, it doth not make it unlawful in this.

Men use to plead their Christian Liberty against such humane impositions. But the best use of Christian Liberty, is still to do those things, which all things considered, tend most to common good, the edification of our selves and others, though otherwise and out of those circumstances we were under no obligation
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to do them. And thus did St. Paul make use of it, who best understood the use of his Christian Liberty. *Though I am free from all Men, saith he, yet have I made my self a Servant unto all, that I might gain the more:* To the Jews I became as a Jew; to them that are without Law, as without Law, and all this *for the Gospel sake*, 1 Cor. 9. 19. 23. The interest of the Gospel in the main did govern him (as it should do us) in the use of his Christian Liberty, sometimes one way, and sometimes another. And therefore we have him sometimes against Circumcision, that the truth of the Gospel might be preserved among the Christians, *Gal. 2. 5. and 5. 1.* And sometimes making use of it for the furtherance of the Gospel, *Acts 16. 3.* And he perswaded the Christians to use their Liberty to which they were called, not so much to please themselves as to *serve one another in Love*; but by no means to use it as an occasion to the flesh, as some would have taught them, in casting off the Rule and Government of Heathen Governours, Masters, and Magistrates, under a pretence of being Christ's Freemen, *Gal. 5. 13. 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2, 3. 2 Pet. 2. 10. Jude 9.* Now I have been shewing before, that

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a Liberty of a total dis-use of the Lyturgie in the publick Worship as the case now stands, cannot be practicable with that advantage to the general interest of Religion, as the use of it may, as any Men of reason may easily discern, if they be not blinded with prejudice and interest. An Argument may much rather be fetched from Christian Liberty for the use of the Lyturgie under the present posture of Circumstances, then against it. For if God hath not limited Prayer to one mode only, then Christians are at Liberty to use any as occasion shall require for the interest of Religion in the Main; and, consequently, that which for the present the Law requires.

I have now near done with the second Dividing-Principle: and when the whole I have said about it hath been considered, I appeal to all who are able to make a judgment in the case, whether those that separate from our Protestant Parish-Congregations, will ever be able to clear themselves from the guilt of sinful Schism, and causeless separation, and of all the mischievous effects that have, and may proceed from it, or be occasioned by it.

And to give yet the greater weight to
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the general scope of what I have said about the Lawfulness of Communion in our Parish Congregations, and of the sinfulness of separating from them, notwithstanding all pretences, I shall set before you the un-erring example of our Blessed Saviour in his holding local Communion when he was on Earth, with such a Church as he did: which, for ought I can judge, was more corrupt both in respect of Persons and things, then any of our Parish-Churches are, though many of them, alas, are too bad indeed. 1. The High Priest-hood, the highest Office in the Church, in which Ministry, all the Worshippers were concerned, was bought and sold for Money, or otherwise unduly obtained, and frequently translated from one to another, contrary to God's appointment, of which we have an account from *Josephus*, besides what we have in *Luke* 3. 2. *John* 11. 49. 51. and 18. 13. 2. Provisions for the Temple-Service, were in part unduly obtained in the Corban way, *Mar.* 7. 11. 3. The Holy Temple was profaned, being made a House of Merchandize and a Den of Thieves, which was otherwise Holy by institution as well as the matter of the Worship it self. 4. The Law was

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corrupted by many false glosses, *Mat. 5.*
 5. The Commandments of Men were
 taught for Doctrines, *Mat. 15. 9.* 6. The
 Church censures were abused to the Ex-
 communication of the best Men, *John 9.*
 22. 34. 7. The Sadduces, who denied
 the Resurrection, or that there is Angel
 or Spirit, were not only tolerated, but
 were also a great and prevailing party in
 that Church. 8. The Scribes, Pharisees,
 Chief Priests, and Rulers, were persecut-
 ing and oppressive, proud, covetous,
 and hypocritical: and the common Peo-
 ple generally so bad, as that they prefer-
 red *Barabbas* before Jesus, and had their
 hands in shedding the Blood of our Sa-
 viour: and they with the other were all
 of them together *a Generation of Vipers,*
a sinful and an adulterous Generation. In
 this lamentable condition was that
 Church then. Yet all this notwithstanding,
 our Saviour did not refrain the pub-
 lick Worship, but held Communion with
 this Church, both in Temple and Syna-
 gogue-Worship, as you may see in *Luke*
2. 41, 42, 43. John 2. 23. and 7. 10.
and 10. 22, 23. Luke 4. 16. Mat. 26.
17, 18. There is no Man ever had so
 good a mind as he, to soundness of
 Doctrine, purity of Worship and Wor-
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shippers, and to right order and Discipline in the Church. And his Wisdome was such, as that he knew perfectly what was fittest to be done under such Circumstances of things, both in reference to his Father's Glory, the furtherance of Religion, the advancement of Reformation, and the Salvation of Men, for which he came into the World; and what course would best conduce to these ends, and what would not. And although as a publick Person he did not spare to reprove the corruptions of the time both in respect of Persons and things, and to endeavour a Reformation in a regular way, yet he never attempted it by breaking off Communion with that Church in the publick Worship, and by erecting separate Communities for Reformation sake; which yet certainly he would have done, if that had been the better and nearer way to those great ends but now mentioned.

And if Men had no other ends or designs then our Saviour had, me-thinks those that are to learn of him, and not to teach him, should not lay aside those means and methods which he made choice of to accomplish his ends, or ever think to make a better choice then he had done.

If

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If when those who are ingenuous and truly consciencious, have well considered these things, and yet after that shall continue separatists from our Parish-Churchs I shall somewhat wonder how or which way they can satisfie themselves in so doing. Me-thinks this unquestionable and uncontroulable patern and example of our Saviour, of whom we are all to learn, and who hath left us an example that we should tread in his steps, should of it self alone if there were nothing else to be said in the case, put an end to all disputes about this business, and satisfie the most scrupulous Christian under Heaven.

The Jews initiating of Profelytes by Baptism as well as by Circumcision, was a humane addition to what God had appointed : and yet for all that our Saviour made choice of Baptism by which to initiate Profelytes into his Religion. He used a gesture in eating the Passeover, different from what was appointed at the first institution, as *Ainsworth* observes on *Exod. 12. 6. 11.* Which things I might improve to several purposes : but because they are not so directly apposite to what I have last discoursed, I shall leave them to be pondered on by such as are scrupulous

scrupulous over much, and who think no alteration of Circumstances between the first and after-use of an institution, will justify a Circumstantial variation from what was first practised thereabout.

III. *Dividing Principle to be avoided.*

Another Dividing Principle, is, That it doth not belong to the Higher Powers in a Nation professing Christianity, to intermeddle in any publick establishment of that Religion, farther then to protect, countenance, and encourage the Professors of it in their Profession. I call this a Dividing Principle, because the Higher Powers doing more then so in having Divided the whole Nation into particular Parish-Churches, and having appointed Gospel-Ordinances to be Administred in those Congregations, and obliging, and constraining all professing the true Christian Religion in the Nation to attend the Worship of God in those Assemblies; this being the National way as they call it, some do therefore separate from it. In opposition to this Dividing Principle, I shall endeavour to shew,

- I. That Nations professing the true Christian

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Christian Religion, do upon that account according to the Scripture, stand related to God as his People in a large sence, and in contradistinction to the Heathen and Infidel World.

2. That a National settlement of the Christian Worship in the Parish-Churches by the Higher Powers, is more for the interest of Religion and Men's Salvation, then if there should be none.

1. To begin with the first of these. When God by *Abraham* designed to set on foot a method of Reforming the World, he declared to him he would do it in a National way : *As for me, my Covenant is with thee, a Father of many Nations shalt thou be : A Father of many Nations have I made thee,* saith the Lord, *Gen. 17. 4, 5.* Meaning, I suppose, that that Reformation which was begun in him, by his Faith and Obedience in forsaking the Idols of his Countrey upon God's call, and betaking himself to the Worship and Service of the true God, should by degrees extend to the taking in of many Nations. God at the very first told him that *he should be a Blessing*, and that in him, and in his Seed, all Nations should be Blessed, *Gen. 12. 2, 3.* And by St. *Paul*, *Rom. 4. 16, 17.* we understand

stand that God's promise of making *Abraham* a Father of many Nations, was not in respect of many Nations descending from him in the way of Natural Generation, but by deriving from him that profession of Faith and holy Worship, which was transmitted down from him, not only to the Nation of the Jews, but also to the Nations of the Gentiles. To begin this Work in a National way, the Lord promised *Abraham* to give to his Seed, his Natural Seed, the Land of *Canaan* as the place where this work should be eminently begun in a National way. And all that Nation were accordingly brought into Covenant with God, and became his Church and People. And all the Profelytes of the Gentiles that forsook their Idols to joyn with them to Worship the God of *Abraham*, and were Circumcised, were without any exception save that of legal uncleanness, to eat the Passeover, *Numb. 9*. And thus it held on in the way of gathering only some here and there out of the Nations of the Gentiles, untill Christ gave Commission to Preach the Gospel to all Nations, Baptizing them.

And as the time of bringing in whole Nations of the Gentiles in times of the

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Gospel drew nearer, so Predictions of it by the Prophets, were more particular and expresse, *Iſa. 52. 15. He shall sprinkle many Nations: to wit, as he promised in particular to the Jews to sprinkle clean water upon them, to cleanse them from all their filthiness, and from all their Idols, Ezek. 36. 25. And again, Iſa. 55. 5. Behold, thou shalt call a Nation that thou knewest not, and Nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee. And God's call of a Nation, and a Nations Answer to that call, makes a Church, works a Relation between God and them; as some have well observed. And Zechariah, one of the last Prophets, speaks yet more expressly, Chap. 2. 11. And many Nations shall be joyned to the Lord in that day, and shall be his People. To be joyned to the Lord, and to be his People, plainly signifie such a Relation between God and them, as doth make them to be of his Church. *Mat. 21. 43. The Kingdome of God shall be taken from you, and given to a Nation: that is, sure Nationally, for otherwise we cannot say it was taken from all of that Nation of the Jews. Rev. 11. 15. The Kingdomes of this World are become the Kingdomes of the Lord, and of his Christ.**

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These Predictions have been fulfilled as Nations have Nationally imbraced and professed the Christian Religion. For it is a vain thing to think that these Prophecies have not yet at all been fulfilled now after the Gospel hath been running its course these sixteen hundred years to accomplish them. And if any have a mind to interpret these Prophecies of National Churches by that in *Revel. 5. 9. And hast Redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every Kinred, and Tongue, and People and Nation*: They may do well to consider, that the calling of a few out of Nations (according to their Notion) is not the calling of those Nations themselves. Its one thing for Men to be brought to effectual Faith and sincere Obedience by the Gospel, and another to be brought to a general profession of it. There are the many that are called, and yet but few that are the chosen, *Mat. 20. 16. and 22. 14.* It is in the one sense that they are said to be Redeemed out of every Kinred, Tongue, People, and Nation; and in the other, that whole Nations are said to be joyned to the Lord, and to be his People; for so they are by a general call and profession. Every individual Person in a Nation that so professeth and

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Worshippeth the true God in opposition to all false gods as to be called by his Name, are in Scripture denominated Sons and Daughters to God in a large sense, *Isa. 43. 6, 7. Bring my Sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the Earth, even every one that is called by my Name.* As the Worshippers of Idols are called the Children of a strange god, *Mal. 2. 11.* So in opposition to that, and in a large sense, all that Worship the true God, are called his Children, as the Jews were, *Deut. 14. 1.* When St. Paul said, in *Gal. 3. 26.* to all the Churches of *Galatia*, *Ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus:* it was sure from their profession of Faith in Christ Jesus in their Baptism by which they put him on (as there he saith) that he so stiles them, and not from the effectualness of the Faith of every one of them: For he chargeth them with *being removed from the Gospel of Christ to another Gospel*, Chap. 1. 6. with *not obeying the Truth*, Chap. 3. 1. and tells them that *he was afraid of them lest he had bestowed labour on them in vain*, Chap. 4. 11. that *he stood in doubt of them*, and was travelling in Birth again with them for the forming of Christ in them, ver. 19, 20. There are many that are the People of

of God by professed Obligation on their part, that are not so by special interest in the promise on God's part, for want of performing the special Condition. And such are the Servants of God, indeed; but they are called in Scripture *Slothfull Servants, unprofitable Servants, wicked Servants, foolish Virgins, Branches in Christ the Vine, that bear no Fruit.*

2. A National settlement of the Christian Worship in the Parish-Churches by the Higher Powers, is more for the interest of Religion, and Men's Salvation, then if there should be none. It is for the interest of Religion in a Nation that are of the true Religion by profession, that the Higher Powers there being of the same Religion, do take order, 1. That God be publickly Worshipped by the People in the use of Gospel-Ordinances. 2. That places for publick Worship be provided for that end. 3. That Church-Officers competently qualified, be appointed to administer those Ordinances in those places; and that maintenance be appointed them that they may attend that Work. 4. That all the People of the Christian Profession, be required to attend the publick Worship. 5. That this be enjoyed under such moderate penalties,

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as may secure the Law from contempt, or careless neglect. 6. That some be appointed to see the Law put in Execution : which yet cannot be practicable without a distribution of the whole into parts in the same, or some such way as that is, by which the whole Nation is divided into Parishes. 7. That Church-Discipline be established and duly exercised for the purging of the Church, and keeping it pure. The first of these particulars that the Higher Powers take care that God be publickly Worshipped by the People, is evident of it self. Nature teaches all Men to Worship him whom they acknowledge to be their God, and by themselves or others to teach those under their Government to do the like, as appears by universal practice. And the second of the fore-mentioned particulars is consequent upon the first, and the third upon the second, and so on.

That these things are for the interest of Religion, every Man's reason will easily discern. For hereby a face of Religion will be kept up in every place in such a Nation, and the means of Salvation will be ready at hand, and all will come under an obligation of Man's Law as well as God's, to make use of them. And hereby
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through the Blessing of God, knowledge and the fear of the Lord will be propagated more then if the People were all left at liberty to do that which is right in their own eyes, to provide, or not provide themselves with such helps, or to use or neglect them as they please. We see by experience that there is generally the least face of Religion in those places that have been most neglected in the publick provision. And it is upon the account of such necessary things as these, that Kings and Queens were promised as a great Blessing to the Church under the Notion of *Nursing Fathers and Nursing Mothers*, to train up, and Educate their People in Religion, *Is. 49. 23.* And the better any Kings and Rulers are, the more careful, and the more zealous will they be to promote and propagate true Religion in their Dominions by their Authority. And usually the success answers the zeal and diligence of such, as we see it did in the good Kings of Judah and their People. When *all Kings fall down before him, all Nations shall serve him*, according to the Prophecie, *Psal. 72. 11.* It will be so with the People, when the Kings of Nations subject themselves to Christ, not only in their personal, but more especially in
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in their Regal capacity. For which cause it should seem St. Paul exhorted the primitive Christians, to *make Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions, for Kings, and all that are in Authority*; as for other respects, so especially for their Conversion to Christianity (they being then Heathen) both that Christians might live peaceable and quiet Lives in all godliness and honesty, and also that Christianity might be propagated in their Dominions, to the Salvation of many the more: For this is implied in the reason of the exhortation in these words: *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all Men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth*; 1 Tim. 2. 2, 3, 4.

And when the primitive Christians had accordingly for a long time travelled by fervent Prayer for the Conversion of the Heathen Emperours to Christianity, at last they obtained their Petition in *Constantine*, that famous Christian Emperour: upon whose Victories over the Enemies to Christianity, and the propagation of the Christian Religion by publick Authority throughout his Dominions, that joyful acclamation was heard in the Church (as Interpreters understand) *Now is come Salvation*

Salvation and strength, and the Kingdome of our God, and the Power of his Christ, Revel. 12. 10. Christianity, and so the Kingdome of God, was in the Empire before by private mens profession of it: but when it came to be backed by Imperial Edicts and Laws, and to be seconded by the power and strength of the Empire; Then, and not till then, was that new Song sung in the Church: *Now is come Salvation and Strength, the Kingdome of our God, and the Power of his Christ.*

I would it were better considered by some who would be thought great Enemies to Popery, how that in this proper and eminent point of Popery, they symbolize with the Pope himself, and all that are thorow-Papists, viz. In denying Kings to have any power in matters Ecclesiastical. When the ten Kings, Revel. 17. 13. parted with this Ecclesiastical Authority to the Pope upon his Usurpation, they gave their Authority, which God had invested them with, as well as their Strength, unto the Beast. And as fast as they fall off from him, they re-assume it again, as we see all Princes and Governours, of the Reformed Religion have done. And of all the Kings that have professed

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professed Christianity ever since there was a Nation professing it, there hath not, I think, been one, but who have claimed a power about ordering Church-affairs, except such as have given their power and strength unto the Beast. And shall we not then interpret and understand the Ancient Prophecies that went of them, by the event in what we see fulfilled?

That Kings may abuse this power to the propagating a false Religion, or in corrupting the true, is no good Argument against the due use of it in propagating the true. *He is the Minister of God to thee for good*, saith the Scripture: and as long as he doth that which tends to publick good, he is not out of his way to be sure, *Rom. 13. 4.* Every Christian is bound to promote the interest of Religion according to his capacity: he that is head of a Family as such is bound to do it: and so he that is head of a Kingdome, as such is bound to do it likewise; every one is under an obligation to do it according to their Talents and several abilities.

It's true indeed, that since all such as are the Higher Powers, are *Ministers of God for good* to the People, and have no power from God to do any thing against the Truth,

Truth, but for the Truth; It is greatly to be wished, and fervently to be prayed for in behalf of all Christian Princes and Governours, that God would give them Wisdom, that nothing may be imposed upon their People by them in the Worship of God, but what hath a plain and apt tendency one way or other to further Edification, or to help their Devotion: And that such wayes and methods of promoting these ends may be made use of, as are least lyable to exception or disputation, thereby to cut off as much as may be, all occasion of Division and pretence of dissatisfaction: that so Peace, Love, and Unity may be recovered, and the happy effects of them obtained.

Yet when all is done that can be done, there will in all National settlements of this Nature, be place for the Exercise of humane prudence. And indeed I know no Sect or party, but though they decry humane prudence about the Worship of God never so much, yet do make use of it themselves in their Administration of Holy things, and are necessitated so to do if they will Worship God publicly at all. The Ordinances of Baptism, Lord's Supper, Word, and Prayer, as touching the matter and substance of them, are par-

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particularly and expressly determined in Scripture: But many particulars about the Administration of these, are left to the guidance and direction of general Rules for Edification. It is not determined in particular what Prayers shall be made either before or after the Administration of Baptism or the Lord's Supper, or what exhortation shall be made to the People upon the occasion of them. It is not determined in particular how, or in what way or method the Word and Prayer shall be used in Church-Assemblies; As how much, and what part of the Scripture shall be read at one meeting, or how, or what way the Minister shall improve the Word by Preaching, as whether by what occurs to his present thoughts upon occasion of what is then read, or by uttering what he hath prepared by painful studies otherwise; or whether he shall do this with, or without the help of Notes. Nor is it particularly determined whether all, or part, or none of the publick Prayers shall be in a prescribed Form, except the Lord's Prayer, or whether any of it shall, or shall not be read out of a Book, or whether Prayer shall be made both before and after Sermon.

Now, in this case those to whom it belongs

belongs to take order for the settling of God's publick Worship in a Nation, with the best advice they can take, will necessarily be put upon considering whether it is best to leave all these things wholly to each Minister's Liberty and choyce, or wholly to limit them, or whether to leave them partly at Liberty, as in the Pulpit, and partly to limit them. And while they deliberate on these things, several circumstances will come under consideration; As the different abilities, and various tempers of the Ministers, and the various capacities and tempers of the People; as whether that which may be best for some, may be best for all, or whether somewhat of a middle Nature may not best accommodate all: and what hath anciently been practised in the Church of God, and what is practised in other Reformed Churches; and which way is most likely to preserve Truth and Peace in the Church, and the like. And when Men have only general Rules to guide and govern themselves by in determining such things as these, it must be remembred that it is a thing incident to the holiest and wisest Men to differ in their application of particular cases to general Rules, when a great variety of
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Circumstances are to be taken in to make a right judgment in the case: their different measures of light, if not of Interests too, exposing them thereunto. Their late differences under a greater Liberty in this kind then can now be expected, is a sufficient proof of this.

And when things of this Nature are done, & determined upon the best terms, as is thought by them into whose hands the Providence of God hath cast it, though it should be otherwise, not only in the thoughts of many others, but also really in it self; yet if nothing be thereby imposed as a Condition of Communion, but what Circumstances considered, is Lawful, the reasons formerly given may, I conceive, well sway with all sober and peaceable-minded Christians, rather to make the best use they can of the present settlement, then to chuse to separate, because it is not in all things to their mind. For if there should not be a bearing with one another in such lesser differences for general Edification sake, and the interest of Religion in the main, and for the maintenance of Peace and Love, till by discreet, sober, and peaceable means those that differ can work themselves, or those that differ from them, into a nearer agree-

agreement; how should it ever be expected that Christians should maintain such fellowship upon their agreement in the substantials of Christianity notwithstanding circumstantial differences, as for which the Scripture is far more express, then it is for such particular modes of Worship, as those are about which they differ. If differences in judgment about Circumstances whereby the substance of Religion is not in danger, should be a sufficient ground of separation, its probable there would be almost as many separations as Churches in the World.

Having now done with what I had to say to take Men off from those Dividing Principles which are chiefly considerable, I shall pursue my Directions for endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, no further, considering what plentiful provision there is already made for Direction in the *Cure of Church-divisions*, as by others, so especially by that laborious Servant of the Lord, Mr. Baxter. I shall therefore conclude this Discourse with a few motives to perswade the several parties which are Divided, to Unite again, and to endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace: And that all on all

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hands would manifest themselves to be such hearty lovers of Peace, Unity, and Charity, as for the sake thereof those that are uppermost, would count it no dishonour, but rather their glory, to condescend to those that are below: and that those again, whose standing is in the Valley, would not think it too much to travel up the Hill to meet them: And if it be thought too much to strive who shall *go before another in giving Honour*, (Rom. 12. 18.) yet if both sorts that differ, would but go as far as they well may, both in respect of Conscience and prudence, towards compounding the difference; how soon, and how easily might both ends be brought together, and the bond of Peace which hath been broken, be pieced again. To this end consider, and lay to heart those few things which I shall lay before you.

1. I shall commend to you the best pattern which you can imitate, and against which there can be no exception, and that is God himself: who though he be so infinitely above all, as to stand in no need of the Friendship of Men, yet out of the Infinite goodness of his Nature, *hath humbled himself*, not only to behold *the things on Earth*, but even to seek the recon-

reconciliation of his Enemies to himself, and to propose new and easie terms of Friendship, when the old had been violated. *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,* 2 Cor. 5. 19. And not to reconcile them to himself only, but also to one another in their common head and center of Union, Christ Jesus. *That in the dispensation of the fulness of time he might gather together in [one] all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on Earth,* Ephes. 1. 10. And to that end hath sent forth Ambassadors of Peace to beseech them to be reconciled to God, and to bring them all to the *Unity of the Faith, and knowledge of the Son of God,* Ephes. 4. 13. And how can we think our selves to be partakers of a Divine Nature, unless we find some resemblance of this goodness of God's Nature in our selves, inclining and disposing us to concord and good agreement with fellow-Christians, by removing out of the way all that unnecessarily hinders it. *Blessed are the Peace-makers, for they shall be called the Children of God,* Mat. 5. 9. And why the Children of God? but because herein they resemble him who is the God of Peace, that loves Peace, and

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seeks Peace, and delights to see Men designing it, and labouring at it, with heart, head, tongue, and hand. *Be ye therefore one and all, followers of God as dear Children, and walk in Love,* Eph. 5. 1, 2. *Be perfect, be of one mind, live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you,* 2 Cor. 13. 11. Can you be ambitious of any greater Honour then to be like God? A likeness to God is the highest Honour and perfection the Nature of any Creature is capable of: And to live in Love and Peace, and to seek Peace, and to be Peace-makers, is the way to be like him. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us,* 1 John 4. 12.

2. If you count it either matter of Honour or comfort to be of a temper like Christ, or if you think it will give you any confidence towards him for the present, and at his coming (as undoubtedly it will) then by this be perswaded likewise to endeavour with all your might that the Unity of the Spirit may be kept in the bond of Peace. For the heart and Soul of Christ is exceedingly set upon Union and good agreement of all that believe in him: though they cannot all know alike and think alike in every thing,
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yet for all that he is greatly desirous they should all hold together as one in Faith and Love. And therefore in that Solemn Prayer of his to his Father, *John 17.* when he was leaving the World, he singles out this in special as the matter of his request to his Father in one of the last Prayers he was to make in this World, *that they all might be one, and be perfected in one.* His heart and desire was so full of this, and so set upon it, that he is at it over and over, mentioning it no less then four times in the same Prayer, *ver. 11. 21, 22, 23.* And why was his heart so much in this? Was it, think you, for himself, or for us? For his own sake, or for ours? He desired no greater thing for himself then to be *Glorified with the Glory he had with the Father before the World was,* before ever he entred upon his Mediatory Office, *ver. 5.* No, it was for us, Men, and for our comfort and benefit that he so much desired it, as knowing how much the Peace, comfort, and Edification of his People depended upon it; and how much the Conversion of the World depended on it, as necessary to make a right representation of Christ to the World, that they might believe that the Father had sent him.

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And was his heart so much in it ! And did he concern himself so much about it for our sakes ! And shall we our selves value it so little as to prefer little and inconsiderable things before it, and that rather for will and humour then any tye of Conscience ! O, God forbid. If we do, it is a sign we do not yet well understand the things that belong to our peace, but that they are hid from our eyes.

And if Christ's heart was so much set upon the Unity and Concordance of his followers, we must needs think they are Men according to his own heart that heartily design, desire, and endeavour it too. And is not that honour enough ? Which sounds of most Honour to *David* ? That he was a King ? Or, that he *was a Man after God's own heart* ? And who are like to be most dear unto Christ, but those who are most like him, and make one heart with him ?

The more you shall find your hearts run out to this thing, as Christ's did ; the more you find your selves of his mind, spirit, and temper herein, the better assurance you will have (and the greater comfort in that assurance) of your dwelling in him, and he in you :
Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and
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he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit, 1 John 4. 13. But if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. 8. 9.

Truly if Men were but as forward to gratifie and please our Lord in this that is so pleasing to him, as they seem to be in some other things in which he never discovered himself to take any such pleasure, things would be quite at another pass among us. And yet if pleasing him be the business, and not somewhat else, why should not we be most for that in which he most delights?

3. Your contentions and Divisions if you will still live in them, and maintain them, will hinder your Spiritual improvement, and keep you from thriving by the means of grace which you enjoy. It was a sad thing that St. Paul charged upon the *Corinthians*, viz. That *their coming together, and exercising themselves in the Holy Ordinances of the Lord, was not for the better, but for the worse, 1 Cor. 11. 17. Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that you come not together for the better, but for the worse.* But what was the cause of this, or upon what doth he ground this charge of their going backward in Religion? Verily it was

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their Divisions that was the cause of this mischief. *For first of all, saith he, when you come together in the Church, I hear that there are divisions among you, ver. 18. That Church abounded in Spiritual gifts, being enriched in every thing, in all utterance and all knowledge, so that they came behind in no gift, Chap. 1. 5. 7. They thrived in these indeed: but then they went backward in their Humility and Charity, and goodness of their Spirit and temper, which made the Apostle to spend almost a whole Chapter in commending Charity above Spiritual gifts to them, besides the several hints he gives of their being puffed up. Though they might well have been Spiritual Christians, considering the opportunity and means they had to make them such: yet because of Envy, Strife, and Divisions among them, some following one Teacher, and some another in opposition; St. Paul could not (as he saith) write to them as to Spiritual, but only as to Carnal, such as were but Babes still, and unthriven in the Life and Spirit of Christianity; their envying, strife, and divisions, keeping them thus low under the means of higher attainments in grace, 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2, 3.*

The truth is, Divisions, Wranglings,
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and Janglings, and Contentions, eat out the very heart of Religion. Men may grow rich in a Form of knowledge, and expresse a great zeal for the out side of Religion, and yet in the mean time be languishing in the very vitals of Christianity, when that knowledge and zeal is not improved and spent for the farthering of Peace and Love, with other Christian Virtues. Your Divisions and Contentions, Christians, will be as a Worm at the root of your Tree, that will keep it from thriving, whatever cost you otherwise bestow upon it.

If then you have any mind to keep up Religion in heart among us, and not to have your Wine to become as Water, having lost its Spirit: If you would have the Gospel-Ordinances yield their increase, and your Religion not degenerate into Form: If you would yield the Lord the acceptable and pleasant Fruit of all his cost, and not such as is starvie, harsh, and unfavoury: If you would not *turn the Fruit of Righteousness into Hemlock*: If you would be free from such a distemper as will hinder your Spiritual relish, and convert your food to a noxious humour, and subject you to a spiritual languishing in the midst of a plentiful provision

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vision for Spiritual health and growth ; Then lay aside your divisions about matters of doubtful disputation, and follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby you may edifie one another in love.

What knowledge soever you have, and what zeal soever you expresse for any truth as you conceive it to be, yet if while you hold fast other things, you let go Charity, your knowledge of, and your zeal in prosecuting and promoting the same, though it were to the losing of your life, will profit you nothing, 1 Co. 13. 2. 3. *I though I understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.* A thing which neerly concerns all such to mind, that are more careful and tender lest some other controverted and supposed truth should suffer, then charity, peace, and concord should suffer ; and care not what rents and divisions they make, so they may but propagate their particular opinion. If there be bitter zeal (as some translate it) glory not of thy knowledge, and lie not against the truth, in saying that's the way to promote it, *1 am.* 3. 14. If you would thrive under the means of grace indeed,

indeed, and be growing up to perfection, then be sure to be much for Charity and Unity. You have much talk of perfection among some, and many that pretend to it that are far from it, but I think it consists in nothing more next our love to God, then in the Saints Love and Unity. This is the cry of the Scripture: *That they made [perfect in one]* John 17. 23. *Be perfect, be of one mind, live in Peace,* 2 Cor. 13. 11. *Above all these put on Charity, which is the bond of perfectness,* Col. 3. 14. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is [perfected] in us,* 1 John 4. 12.

If some do grow in grace after they have fallen into dividing wayes, and separating practises (as I am not so uncharitable, but to think that they do, while the errour lyes not in their will, but in their judgment) yet this growth is not to be attributed at all to that wherein they differ from other good Christians, not of their way, who grow in grace too, but to those sound Principles of Christianity wherein both the one and the other are agreed. And I have good reason to think that the same improvement of those unquestionable Principles by which they grow in grace, their separation,

ration, notwithstanding, would set them much forwarder in that growth, in case they were at Liberty from the intanglements of separation, then under them it can: Because those wayes of Division and Separation, do Naturally tend to narrow Men's Spirits and Charity, and to cause them to think that many are not of the Church of Christ, which indeed are: and to have low thoughts of many, that yet are highly eminent in the Church for their worth and Service; and all because they are not of their way: and besides, through prejudice they deprive themselves of many happy advantages of Spiritual growth, which otherwise they would make use of. And those that abound most in a well-grounded and regular Charity, have, doubtless, the more of God's presence and assistance with them for their Spiritual growth and comfort too, as others for want of it, have the less. *If he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him (1 Joh. 4. 16.)* then those that abound most in Love, must needs have most of God's presence, both to assist, quicken, and comfort them. *Live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you,* to increase these and to help you to propagate them
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(2 Cor. 13. 11.) and to give you great Peace in so doing, as some have found by Experience.

But though the wayes of separation among us, do but as the Rickets, hinder some in their growth, and not totally deprive them of it, yet it is to be feared they make some others much worse then they were before they came into them: more goodly and self-conceited, more proud and imperious, slighting and despising others that are much better then themselves, and over-valuing themselves quite upon account of the Form and Church they are got into: and more uncharitable in censuring others as carnal, as time-servers, as Men of the World, only because of the National way, and not of theirs, though otherwise never so worthy. Many of these are growing indeed, but it is farther and farther into separation, till at last they commence *Quakers*.

4. If you prize your comfort, prize harmony and good agreement, not among this or that sort or party only, but among all that do agree in things of absolute necessity to Salvation to all. For those that are living, and not dead, or benumb'd Members of Christ's Body, cannot

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cannot but be pained with the rending of one Member of that Body from another. *If one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it*, 1 Cor. 12. 26. Was it not a sad sight to see the Man, in *Mar. 5. 5.* cutting himself with stones? And an Argument that he was possessed with an evil Spirit? And I pray you how much less doleful is it to see the People of God, Members of the same Body, cutting and wounding themselves? For so they do when they cut and wound one another: *For they are Members one of another*, Rom. 12. 5. Alas, how unnatural is this! *For no Man yet ever hated his own flesh*. Certainly where thus it is, they are under a Spiritual phrenzy and madness, and are objects of very great commiseration as well as occasions of great trouble and disturbance in the Church of God. But, O, the *Comfort of Love* (as the Apostle phraseth it, *Phil. 2. 1.*) and the pleasantness of Peace, and the delight of harmony, which is like a well-tuned Instrument where there is no jarring. *Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity!* Psal. 133. 1. A great part of the comfort of a Christian in this World, lyes in his Communion with Saints:

Saints : *David said, the Saints and excellent were all his delight.* Psal. 16. 3. And therefore a breach in this, must needs make a breach in a Christians comfort.

5. The Christian cause and interest in in the World calls loudly upon all such as would approve themselves to have any Love for it, or to be any Friends to it, and not betrayers of it, to Unite, and to close up the Divisions that are among us, and not to persist in separating practices, or to do any thing that contributes thereto, but the contrary. One great means of facilitating the belief of the Gospel, and of propagating the Christian Religion, and of bringing it into reputation in the World, is the Union and good agreement of all Christ's followers. And therefore he prayed so earnestly, as we heard before, *that they all might be one, as he and the Father are one, that they also might be perfect in one,* and all for this end, *that the World might believe that the Father had sent him,* Joh. 17. 20, 21. That Men might believe that he came from God indeed, and that he was no Impostor, but that his Gospel is the infallible Truth, and that Religion which is taught thereby, is the only true Religion. For Christ's followers are those by whom the Gospel is upheld in
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the World, and held forth and witnessed to the World : *They hold forth the Word of Life* (Phil. 2. 16.) *they are the Pillar and ground of the Church*, 1 Tim. 3. 15. And the more unanimous these are in judgment, affection, and testimony, the stronger and more authentick will their testimony be, & the more Men will be drawn to consider it, and to lay to heart the import of it: But the more they are divided about it, the more this Gospel, this Religion, comes under suspicion in the minds of many : and from their differing about lesser things, the ignorant, the weak, and unbelieving, will draw arguments of suspicion and hesitation about the greater, and be ready to conclude the uncertainty of the whole, by their differing about a part ; especially when their difference rises so high, and becomes so notorious and publick, as it does when they separate about it. This is lamentably experienced, not only in the continued infidelity of Jews and Turks, but also in that Atheism and Scepticism, which hath so exceedingly increased upon us since these sad times of Division and Separation among us. Our Divisions unsettle the minds, unhinge and distract the Souls of many, that they know not whom to follow, or where to fix : and by

by this means they are exposed to be practised upon by seducers, and carried away. Your Divisions encourageth seducers, and the Adversaries of our Reformed Religion in their designs against you, and invites them to attempt upon you; So that as long as you keep up your Divisions, they will make an advantage of it, grow upon you, and get ground, and by little and little draw away your strength; and in conclusion, over-master you, if by Uniting, you prevent them not. Your Adversaries know the meaning of *divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel*, if you do not; and of those words, *A Kingdome divided against it self, cannot stand*. It hath been, no doubt, their practice by all the artifice they could, to raise and foment your Divisions, as it is still to continue and increasethem, as designing ruine to the Protestant interest thereby. And will you gratifie them herein? And become their Instruments to accomplish your own destruction and the destruction of that cause and interest which should be more dear to you then your Lives? God forbid. And therefore let no lesser interests of worldly advantage, be it profit, be it honour among Men, or reputation among a party, tempt

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you to betray this greater interest of your Lord and Master, of Religion, and of your Souls. Be not herein penny wise, and pound foolish. Revive not that complaint, *Phil. 2. 21. All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.* Expose not Religion to loss and damage in the main, and in the substance of it, by being too tenacious of mutable Circumstances. Be not so concerned for your Cabbin, as to expose the Ship to sinking through your neglect.

I have now done : Only remember, I pray you, that the things wherein the divided parties professedly agree, are such as carry in them the main of Christianity, and will make good Christians indeed, if lived up to. Whereas the things upon which we divide, are but disputable opinions, the best of which on the one side or the other, will never make a good Christian without the other. And you know what account God made of Men's zeal though it were for his own institutions, as among the Jews of old, when they were greatly guilty of sins against Charity. Though Men be never so Orthodox in, and zealous for their opinions, yet if they have not Charity, they are but as sounding brasse, or a tinkling Cymbal. A wise Man will
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not therefore value himself by that which is proper to such or such a party, but by that Charity, Humility, and Sobriety of mind with other graces, which are common to those that are good indeed, in each party: and by these he will value any man of what party soever, and how different soever from himself in by-opinions. If those of each party then would but steer by this compass, and proportion their zeal to the Nature of things, labouring more to lessen differences, to make peace, and to recover Charity, then to propagate those things which as they are more uncertain, so at best are less acceptable to God, and less profitable unto Men; and, consequently, less attractive of their zeal; I should not doubt but that in a little time, things would be at a much better pass in the Church of God, then for the present we see them to be.

THere is great reason to think that many of the Non-Conformists do hold it Lawful for Persons in the capacity of private Members to joyn in parochial Communion, who yet do not do so themselves. The five dissenting Brethren that lived in separation from parochial Communion, yet did in their Apologetical Narration profess before God and the World, *that all that conscience of defilement they conceived cleaved to our Parish-Churches, or of the unwarrantable power of Church-Governours exercised therein, did never work in them any other thought, much less opinion, but that multitudes of the Parish-Congregations, were the true Churches and Body of Christ, and the Ministry thereof a true Ministry.* And I have no reason to doubt but that very many of the present Non-Conformists that never went so far as those, are of the same opinion, who yet live not in communion with those Parish-Churches, though they live among them. And I cannot but wonder that the sense they must needs have of the ill tendency of our Divisions, and of the desirableness of Peace and Unity, should not deter them from making, or keeping the breach wider then needs, wide: then the necessity of not
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sinning, puts them upon. For it cannot be denied, but that it is a duty incombent upon Christians, and becoming all that love & long for peace & unity in the Church, to go as far as ever a good Conscience will carry them towards the lessening of our differences, and closing up the breach among us.

They cannot but know as well as all other men, that to break Church-Communion and rend the Church, where men are not necessitated to do so or to sin, is Schism. And I must needs say they put the Charity of their Friends hard to it, not to think they condemn by their practice, what they allow in their judgment, while by separation they break the Unity of the Church, which according to their own judgment, they might forbear to do without sin.

If they think their concession touching the Lawfulness of Lay-Communion with our Parish-Churches will free them from the guilt of Schism, though they themselves keep in no such Communion, I may well pray them to consider, whether that very thing doth not render their Schism in some respect more criminal then theirs who separate as accounting our Churches no true Churches; since it seems to proceed more from error in the will (which is
error

errour of the worst kind) than Schism in the others doth ; and since their judgment & practice seem more to enterteire, and to render them self-condemned in their way. When *Peter* knew that the difference between the believing Jews and the believing Gentiles was no sufficient ground of separation between them, and yet did withdraw and separate himself from the believing Gentiles, for fear of displeasing the believing Jews ; St. *Paul* withstood him to his face, because he was worthy to be blamed, and so much the rather, because he drew *Barnabas* and other Christians into the same dissimulation with himself, *Gal.* 2. 11, 12, 13.

These things considered ; One would think they should apprehend it far more safe, and less scandalous, and more conduceable to Peace, Unity, and Love, and a more regular way of obtaining the removal of burthens, for those Non-Conforming Ministers as can, to maintain Communion as private Members with the Parishes, and to perswade their hearers to do so too ; though otherwise they should think it fit for the exercise of their gifts and function, at convenient times to improve His Majesties Indulgence to Preach in other places besides the Temples.

T H E E N D.

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